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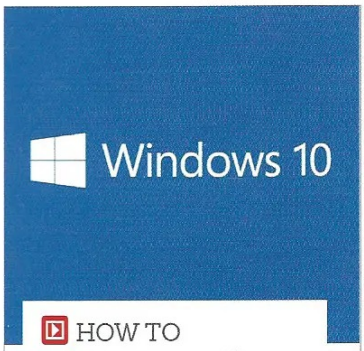

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August 2015

GET YOUR GAME ON

Spring is fast drawing towards us and as the days get longer we're heading in to one of our favourite times of the year: the period when major games get released. As we write, it's the massive GamesCom convention in Cologne which where publishers will show off the games we can expect to be in our consoles by Christmas, and so far it's looking like a boom year.

So to get you ready, we've put together this special gaming issue of TechMadeEasy. Inside you'll find tons of advice and reviews of the greatest gaming kit available: everything you'll want in your lounge for maximum enjoyment.

And then, to top it off, there's the opportunity to win one of Sony's latest 1TB versions of the PlayStation 4 (p45). What's not to like?

Enjoy the issue!

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UBER 5

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PUBLISHER: Brett Haggard – brett@htxt.co.za
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Adam Oxford – adam@htxt.co.za
MANAGING EDITOR: Nick Cowen - nick@htxt.co.za
HARDWARE & GAMES: Deon du Plessis – deon@htxt.co.za
TECH & NEWS: Charlie Fripp – charlie@htxt.co.za
STARTUPS & STUFF: Lungelo Shezi – lungelo@htxt.co.za

SENIOR DESIGNER: Quinton Hoffmann – quinton@htxt.co.za

ADVERTISING: Dorothy Haggard – dorothy@hypertext.co.za
Sengezo Jubane – sengezo@hypertext.co.za

hypertext media

htxt.africa's Tech Made Easy is produced by:
Hypertext Media, 102 on 11th, Highlands North, 2192, Johannesburg
Contact Us:
Email: info@hypertext.co.za
Tel: (011) 023-8001/4
Fax: 08654 83304

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FACEBOOK BUYS WHATSAPP FOR R200BN

Facebook has just dived into its war chest again to make another big purchase, this time it's buying the popular messaging service WhatsApp.
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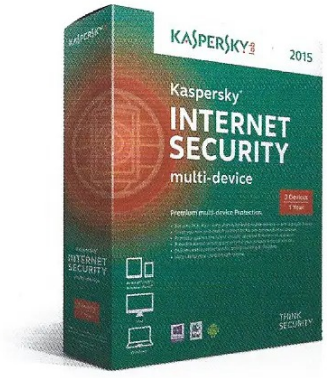

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UBER

Uber drivers need to apply for metered taxi licences in JHB

Taxi booking app gains acceptance from SA authorities.

The big news in tech this month has undoubtedly been taxi booking app Uber. The US tech firm, which makes summoning a hire car simple, has been under fire from established metered cab drivers which have resorted to intimidation and violence to try and put passengers off.

After weeks of headlines, Uber has finally had some good news. In Cape Town, almost 150 cars were finally awarded metered cab licences and in Gauteng the provincial authorities have met with Uber's local leaders to give Uber drivers advice on how to gain legal status.

Gauteng's MEC for Roads and Transport Ismail Vadi has advised drivers using the taxi-hailing service to apply for metered taxi licenses as soon as possible and condemned the measures some metered taxi drivers have been reportedly using against them.

In a statement following talks held last week involving Vadi, Uber and the Gauteng Provincial Metered Taxi Council, the Roads and Transport MEC said: "All parties agreed that any form of violence and intimidation against any service provider or their clients was totally unacceptable and that should any incident of this nature occur, the law enforcement agencies must act decisively against the perpetrators."

Vadi said that the Roads and Transport Department would advise the Provincial Regulatory Entity responsible for the issuing of public transport licenses "to accept, process and, where applicable, approve Uber partner-drivers under the metered taxi services operating license category."

"Uber partner-drivers should apply for metered taxi licences and they should do so as soon as possible," he said.

"We strongly welcome the MEC's commitment to stopping the violence and intimidation caused by a small number of metered taxi drivers," Uber said in a statement. "Technology is changing the way people move around so the MEC's willingness to embrace this, in Gauteng, will help us support entrepreneurs in creating new jobs. The clarity of how our partners should be licensed in the interim is useful and we hope permits will be issued as a matter of urgency."

Whether or not Uber drivers registering as metered taxi operators will end the conflict between them and their competition remains to be seen. Talks were held between all three parties again at the weekend, so we can live in hope…

Bit.ly/10rTlXi

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DONALD TRUMP LOSES TWITTER ELECTION TO AN AVACADO

US presidential hopeful Donald Trump has been making something of a fool of himself lately, and Twitter proves itself adept at puncturing the ego-filled balloon.

GTA MOCKING PARODY TOPS STEAM BEST SELLER LIST

You might think Batman: Arkham Knight or Witcher 3 are popular, but they have nothing on silly satire NotGTAV – a $0.74 game which plays largely like the old Snake on your Nokia phone.

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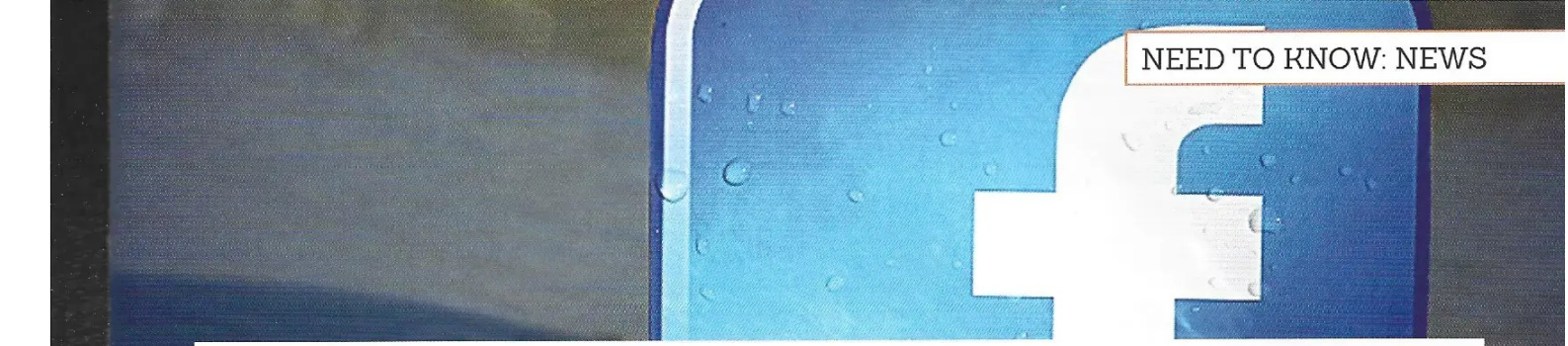


How to get online shopping, sports and news for free with internet.org

Facebook's free internet access has launched in SA. Here's what to expect.

Last month, mobile operator Cell C announced it had partnered with Facebook's Internet.org to launch the free service for South African customers on the mobile network at the beginning of this month, bringing with it free access to Facebook and a host of other content.

So, how exactly does internet.org work and what are its benefits? Read on and we'll take you through it.

Internet.org is free for all Cell C contract customers, while those on prepaid must keep their line active by recharging at least once every 30 days to keep accessing the service.

Before getting into all the details, an important factor we picked up when we first tried internet.org out is that it's won't work when connected to WiFi, even if you are a Cell C customer. Upon further testing, we saw that if you switch to your mobile connection, visit the site on your browser (it should definitely let you in by now) and switch back to WiFi, you should be able to carry on from there.

On the internet.org home page, you'll see a list of all the free services available. We've summarised description of what you can do on them.

FACEBOOK

The main service that's punted on internet.org is Facebook. Here you can post and view and status updates, comments, see their News Feed, timeline and profiles of other users and use Facebook Messenger for text chat. Standard data rates will apply for all other Facebook-related activities such as posting and viewing videos and voice calling on Messenger.

It doesn't look as sophisticated as the Facebook app, but you shouldn't have any hassles with navigating it.

INFORMATION CHANNELS

Bing, Cell C, wikiHow and Wikipedia

You can use the Bing search engine to look up information and images. Visit the Cell C mobisite, look up a bunch of "how tos" on wikiHow and browse the Wikipedia online encyclopaedia.

EDUCATION CHANNELS

BeSmart, LoveWords, FunDza, Scholars4Dev, Wattpad, WorldReader and D-Siders

BeSmart helps with tips, quizzes, games and information on a number of topics from job interviews, history, news, English grammar maths and science.

LoveWors is for all the wordsmiths who enjoy reading and writing poetry and short stories and polishing their English skills through quizzes and tests.

FunDza contains themed stories, essays and poems written by ordinary young people on the portal. If you fancy yourself a future author, you can also submit your own stories to be published on FunDza.

Scholars4Dev helps South African youth find scholarships to study at certain tertiary institutions abroad.

Wattpad and WorldReader are other story and book reading apps you can use to read stories upcoming authors. You can also save a book for offline reading and comment and rate it once you're done.

D-Siders is a life orientation-esque daily mobile soapie design to teach youth about pressings social issues. Users can also discuss some of the topics addressed in each episode.

WOMEN CHANNELS

Intel She Will Connect, Girl Effect, iLearn

Intel She Will Connect educates girls and women about how they can get connected to and use the internet and what the benefits of being connected are.

Girl Effect is a movement aimed at reaching out to girls in Africa and offering them life tips and advice and giving them a platform to share about their life stories, struggles and triumphs.

iLearn is a financial education platform that seeks to teach women about handling their money, starting their own company and offers inspirational stories from other women who have become successful entrepreneurs.

HEALTH CHANNELS

Health24, BabyCentre and MAMA, HIV360 and Facts for Life

Health24 is 24.com's general health information portal where you can read up on the latest health news.

BabyCentre and MAMA – which was developed in South Africa – helps expectant mothers and moms with a baby from 0 to 12 months learn all they need to know about pregnancy, taking care of yourself and your baby and a baby's milestones. Moms can also connect with each other and exchange advice and tips.

HIV360 teaches users all about HIV or AIDS, how to prevent either one and how to live positively with it.

Facts for Life helps mothers take care of their unborn baby, newborn, infant or toddlers by proving them with health information on a range of illnesses common among children.

MARKETPLACE

Gumtree and OLX

Get access to two of South Africa's biggest online classifieds where you can buy or sell anything from electronics, cars, appliances and property for rent or sale.

NEWS CHANNELS

BBC News, News24 and SuperSport

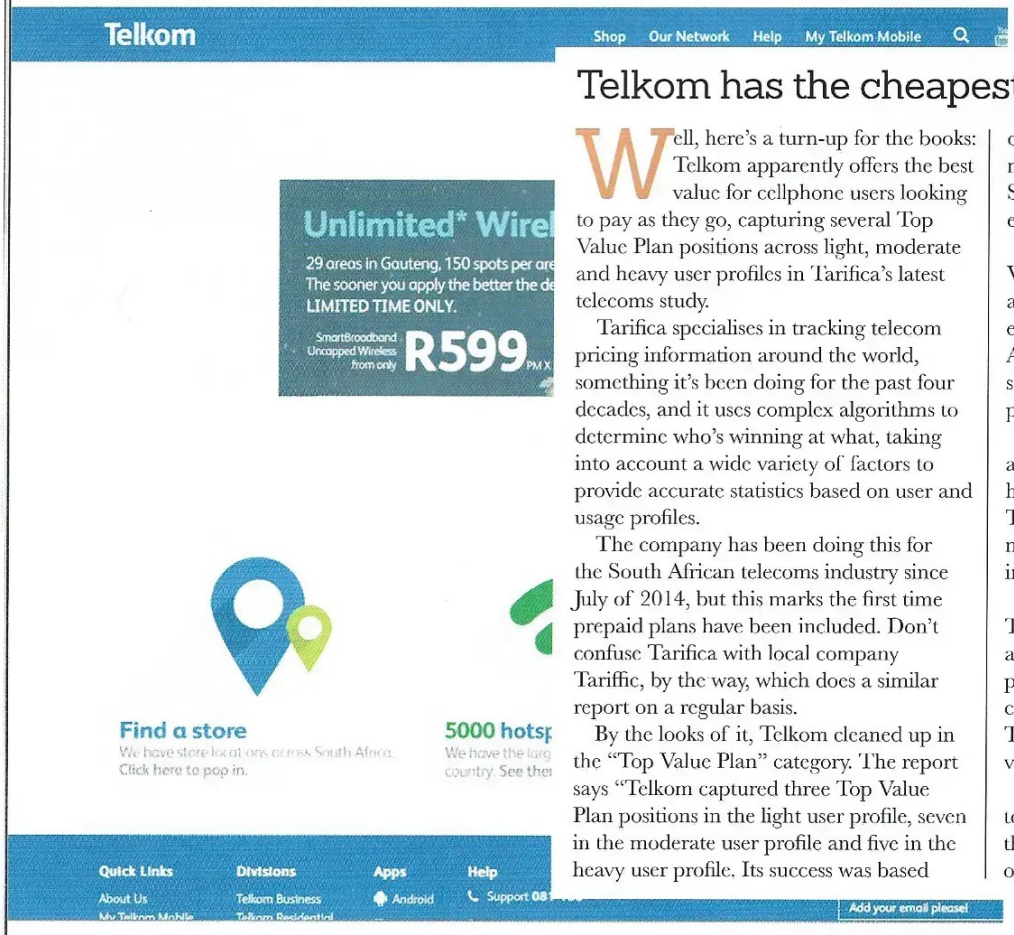
Read up on international, continental and local news stories from the BBC, News24 and Supersport.

FINANCE AND JOBS CHANNELS

Careers24, SmartBusiness and Money Matters

Careers24 allows you to browse available job posts and upload your CV to apply for them.

For those who prefer being their own boss, SmartBusiness will give you information and advice on how to go about doing so, while Money Matters will teach consumers how to budget and handle their money well. **Bit.ly/10rX72Z**



Telkom has the cheapest prepay tariffs

Well, here's a turn-up for the books: Telkom apparently offers the best value for cellphone users looking to pay as they go, capturing several Top Value Plan positions across light, moderate and heavy user profiles in Tarifica's latest telecoms study.

Tarifica specialises in tracking telecom pricing information around the world, something it's been doing for the past four decades, and it uses complex algorithms to determine who's winning at what, taking into account a wide variety of factors to provide accurate statistics based on user and usage profiles.

The company has been doing this for the South African telecoms industry since July of 2014, but this marks the first time prepaid plans have been included. Don't confuse Tarifica with local company Tariffic, by the way, which does a similar report on a regular basis.

By the looks of it, Telkom cleaned up in the "Top Value Plan" category. The report says "Telkom captured three Top Value Plan positions in the light user profile, seven in the moderate user profile and five in the heavy user profile. Its success was based on having the second least expensive per-minute calling rate and aggressively priced SMS and data bundles that allow users to easily scale to match their mobile usage."

Cell C's success in the Top Overall Value Plan category and two others was apparently "...based on having the least expensive per-minute calling rate in South Africa and effective bundling", and MTN scored best in the moderate and heavy user profile categories.

Vodacom, meanwhile, didn't win in any categories because of its "...relatively high per-minute and per-SMS rates", but Tarifica stated it performed better in the moderate and heavy categories than it did in the light.

Tarifica's South African analyst, Beth Teitel, wrote that "Telkom had strong plans and a variety of options at virtually every price point. MTN and Cell C were each competitive in one or two profiles, but only Telkom's plans provided strong consumer value across the board."

So there you have it. Should you want to go prepaid and you don't want to pay through the nose for it, check out Telkom's options. **Bit.ly/1OrXZVo**

South Africa's first drone pilot licence awarded

There's been a lot of talk, a lot of confusion and a lot of misinformation about who can and who can't fly drones in South Africa over the last couple of years. But now that the SA Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) has a set of legal regulations for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in place, there's happier news to report on the issue today.

According to a release from the Department of Transport, the first RPAS pilots licence was awarded last week to 23-year-old Nicole Swart, who is a testing standards officer at SACAA. **Bit.ly/1OrXScr**

4 000 Gauteng classrooms go paperless

The Gauteng Department of Education has launched its second major IT initiative this year. Some learners at 375 no-fee paying schools in the province return from their winter holidays in the morning, it'll be to paperless classrooms.

According to a release put out by the department this morning, 17 000 tablets and and 1800 3D LED interactive boards are being distributed into 4 000 classrooms, predominantly in township and rural areas. We've asked the department to confirm that these are the same tablets provided by controversial IT company Cloudseed last year which were recalled at the start of 2015 due to lack of support in the form of training, software or security.

To support the new classrooms, renovations have taken place with new ceilings, special fitted lights, installing burglar-proof doors and window bars, electrical supply for smart boards and, most thoughtfully, installation of window blinds so that pupils can see their displays. **Bit.ly/1OrY6A2**

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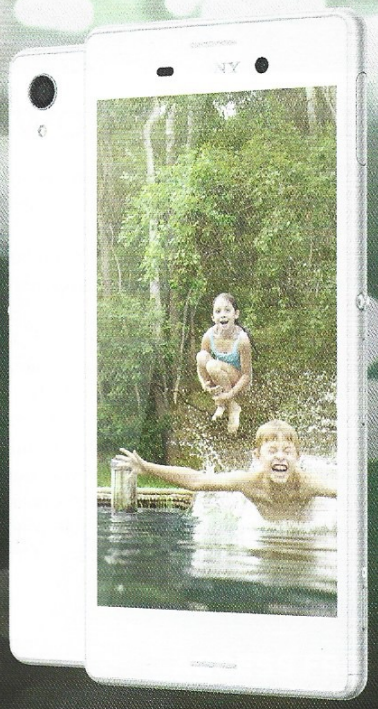

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Rise Of The Tomb Raider PS4 outed by Australian retailer

If you're a PS4 owner who has been grinding their teeth over the fact that Rise Of The Tomb Raider isn't coming to your console, an retailer Down Under may have just proffered a glimmer of hope.

Australian retailer Harvey Norman has put up a pre-order page for Rise Of The Tomb Raider, specifically for the PS4 platform, priced at AUS$88 (roughly R816).

The marketing blurb on the site says players will enter into "a dark world Lara Croft is forged into a survivor in the Rise of Tomb Raider . In an attempt to understand what she's witnessed Lara delves deeper into the mysteries of the Lost City and attracts the attention of a dangerous shadow organisation. For PlayStation 4."

The listing doesn't offer an release date at present, but the information there will probably be of interest to Sony fanboys (and girls) for a couple of reasons. First, while the sequel to 2013's gritty reboot of the Tomb Raider franchise is currently a timed exclusive on Xbox One, there's been no confirmation from its publisher Square Enix about whether was ever going to land to PS4. The listing seems to suggest that it will. **Bit.ly/1OrYkXS**

Did you know you could play Starcraft 2 for free?

If you've ever been interested in playing Blizzard's superb Real-Time-Strategy (RTS) game Starcraft 2, but you've always found the prospect too intimidating to pony up the dough, then fret no more; you can now play it for free.

No, this isn't a cruel prank.

Head over to the developer's website, Battle.net, and you can play the SCII: Starter Edition for free. As the packages title would suggest, you don't get the full fat version of Starcraft 2, with every ounce of content available to paying customers. Instead, you gain access to the following:

- The first four missions of the StarCraft II: Wings of Liberty single-player campaign
- The first two Challenges: Tactical Command and Covert Ops.
- Access to the Terran race in Custom Games and Single-Player vs. AI.
- Access to the four custom maps

This means that while you won't be able to play ranked matches against other players in the multiplayer, you will be able to beat the hell out of your friends – provided they own either a copy of the full game or the Starter Edition. If your mate owns the Heart Of The Storm expansion, you can play with that expansions extra units to bring your RTS skills completely up to speed.

In a way, Blizzard offering a free version of Starcraft 2 makes sense. In recent years, the audience for eSports has ballooned to the hundreds of millions and industry pundits say that figure is only likely to increase in the future.

Right now, Blizzard has three eSports IPs in the market – World Of Warcraft, Hearthstone and Starcraft – with a fourth up in the air – Heroes Of The Storm. Out those four franchises in the market, the only game that wasn't free in some shape or form was Starcraft 2. That is, up until now… **Bit.ly/1OrYmzf**

More stories at htxt.africa
go to htxt.co.za

SECOND CHANCE FOR A DAY IN THE WOODS

SA-developed iOS game A Day in the Woods is getting a second lease of life too thanks to Pocket Gamer and its Unsung Heroes competition. Go vote for it here. **Bit.ly/1OrYuOY**

FINALLY, A TRUE SEQUEL TO ANGRY BIRDS AND IT'S CALLED ANGRY BIRDS 2, NATCH

Despite all the franchised spinoffs to popular mobilegame Angry Birds, there's never been a "true" sequel. Until now. Go check out Angry Birds 2 and what makes it different today. **Bit.ly/1OrYD4Y**

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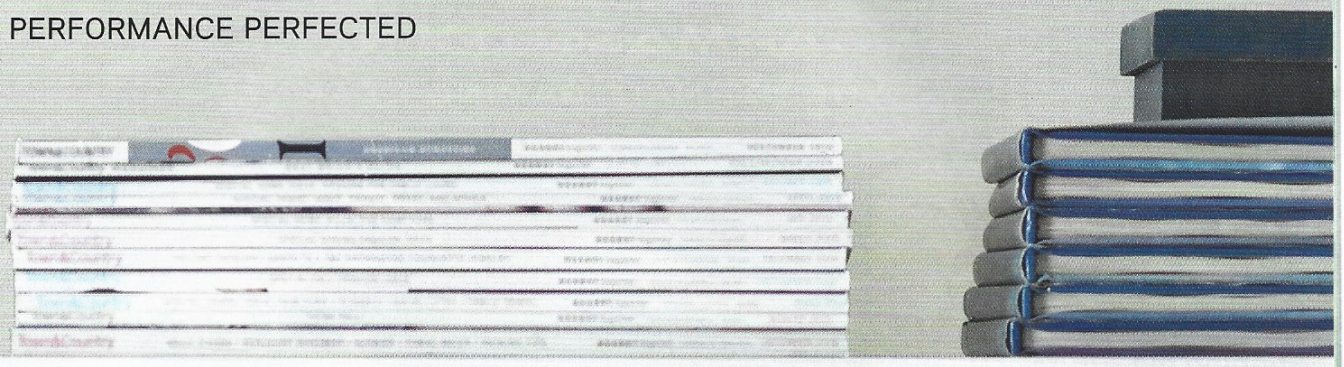

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COME SEE US AT RAGE

It's Borderlands, Jim, but not as we know it

Co-op shooter Battleborn is coming, and it reminds us of something.

Battleborn feels very familiar. From the moment players sit at its controls it becomes immediately apparent that Battleborn owes a debt of inspiration – if not direct influence – to one of the most beloved multiplayer shooter franchises of the last generation of consoles: Borderlands.

Battleborn marches in lockstep with Gearbox's co-op shooter – and not just because its a team-based FPS; everything from its outlandish characters to its bizarre weapons to its rustic sci-fi setting to its snarky humour immediately recalls Borderlands.

In it, five players pick from a list of 25 characters (although in the demo, we were given access to 10) from varying classes boasting wildly different abilities. Marquis, for example, is a sniper who has the ability to slow down time and he can deploy a clockwork owl as ranged attack. Thorn is a bow-toting elven warrior who can fire a spray of five arrows at once and 'curse' her enemies, causing them extra damage.

There's likely to be a character to fit every style of play. If you're comfortable playing a healer, you can pick Miko, who's best use in a fight is to keep his allies health bars stacked. If you'd like to swap out shooting for hack 'n slash, you can select Boldur or Rath, melee fighters who wield a hammer and shield and set of katanas respectively. For those new to games where characters' abilities are asymmetrical, the best starting point in Battleborn is Oscar Mike, a foot solider armed with a gun and a grenade launcher who has the handy ability to turn invisible for short stretches.

As is the case with Borderlands, Battleborn boasts a levelling mechanic, in which players can unlock boosts and new powers once they rack up enough XP by killing enemies. The RPG system is a pretty streamlined affair; instead of multi-tiered talent trees that offer player huge amounts of depth in how they develop their character, Battleborn's levelling mechanic (or Helix) offers players a choice between two abilities. This makes sense; while players have a base experience level – presumably to aid with in-game matchmaking – every character they play re-sets has their XP and abilities stripped at the end of every match.

Once players hit level 5 with their character, they can unlock their Ultimate Power. This essentially gifts them a massively damaging attack, which in some instances is limited to the enemies in their immediate vicinity (as in the case of Rath, who becomes a whirling hurricane of blades) and in others can be used at range (Oscar Mike has the ability to call down a rocket strike from an orbital platform). The only character in the demo that didn't cause damage with their Ultimate Power was Miko, who instead, transformed into a healing pool.

According to 2K, Battleborn will feature a campaign, PVP modes and Player Vs AI matches. There's a thin story underpinning the game's story mode – the greatest heroes of the Cosmos gather together to prevent the end of the universe and the eradication of all life – but it looks like it'll be mostly played for laughs. Then again, not every game needs decent stories to capture an audience – the plot for Blizzard's MOBA Heroes Of The Storm was so barmy, at one point in the tutorial one of the characters advised the player not to think about it too much.

It certainly has potential, but first, it needs to attract an audience and one has to wonder how much appeal streamlined RPG/FPS hybrid that looks and plays so much like Borderlands can have. Fans of Gearbox's other shooter may give it go, but its lack of depth and meaningful progression might put them off. It's also not clear whether the game can win over fans of similar team-based online shooters.

Still, it's early days yet and we've only seen one mode and ten heroes. We can only hope that Gearbox has more details to release in the days to come – otherwise, you can't really bank on Battleborn in the long term. **Bit.ly/1eQ19oU**

MSI GT80 Titan

The world's first laptop with a mechanical keyboard built-in, but is it worth the massive asking price?

DETAILS

- **Processor:** *Intel Core i7 4980HQ @2.80GHz*
- **RAM:** *32GB @ DDR3-1600*
- **Storage:** *4X 128GB SSD in RAID 0 + 1TB HDD*
- **Display:** *18.4" WLED FHD (1 920 x 1 080) Anti-Glare Display @ 100Hz*
- **Ports:** *2X mini display, HDMI, Ethernet, 5X USB 3.0, SD Card, Optical Audio, 2X Audio*
- **Operating System:** *Windows 8.1*
- **Weight:** *4.5Kg*

Starting at R41 999

There are times in life where subtlety and half-measures are the best option. Choosing the rogue over the barbarian, using words instead of violence, diplomacy over war, all that hippy jazz.

With the MSI GT80 Titan, that all goes out the window. The GT80 doesn't even look like a laptop (and it's certainly far too large to be one): it looks like a Decepticon, it looks like something Michael Bay would focus a shot on while several explosions light up the background.

Luckily, MSI is doing some unprecedented things with the GT80 that may justify this audacity.

While many honours will be heaped upon the GT80, the most obvious is that the GT80 has the unique honour of being the first "laptop" to feature a mechanical keyboard.

The bottom line is mechanical keyboards are more accurate for fast typists, last longer and can have proper tactile feedback so you know when a key has been pressed by feeling for the clunk as the switch goes down. That also means they're noisier than membranes to type on, but seriously – nothing can touch a mechanical keyboard.

The problem with mechanical keyboards is their size and complexity. They don't lend themselves to being slid on top of a wafer thin slice of laptop that is only a few millimetres thick. For starters, they'd increase the depth by a factor of 10, and they'd probably smash through the bottom of most normal laptops when pounded too.

So, how does it work with the GT80? A tenkeyless design (that is, a keyboard without a numpad) from Steelseries is integrated neatly into the laptop's chassis, with genuine Cherry MX Brown switches. These feel equally as good to type and game on while not requiring a whole lot of force to actuate a key.

As a gaming "laptop" with all of MSI's "G Series" dragon badges, the GT80 will need to pack some serious firepower to justify its price and size. And we're very happy to report that this is exactly what it does.

As for as synthetic benchmarks go, it scored 13 487 in 3DMark. To put that into perspective, what 3DMark calls a "4K Gaming PC" scores 17 805. In PCMark 8 the GT80 was almost unbelievably good, scoring 5 379, beating out that 4K PC at 4 753. If numbers excite you, you'll be happy to know that the GT80 is not lacking in the slightest.

To keep all that power from burning your house down, the cooling system built on top of the cards look like something that would look right at home sitting in the engine bay of a Lamborghini. As cool as it looks, with that power comes a pretty significant trade-off: noise.

Let's make this plain: this is the loudest machine we've ever had in the office. During gaming and benchmarking the GT80 hovered around 85 decibels and peaked at 90 (near the exhausts). According to this chart, that's as loud as traffic noise from trucks, as well as a train whistle at 152 metres.

The only saving grace is the ability to turn the fan speed down, but expect a drop in performance as the system has to slow down so as not to overheat.

Also, the screen is only 1 920x1 080, not a high resolution 2 650x1 440 like other high end laptops, and you might think we'd throw the expense GT80 out for being ridiculous. But we love it. And we're exceptionally glad MSI has made it, even if we'll never be able to afford it.

An extended version of this review is online at **Bit.ly/1ONj8sq**

SCORES

Specs	10
Performance	10
Battery life	2
Design	9
Functionality	9
Overall	8

DETAILS

- **CPU:** *Intel Core i7-5500U*
- **Graphics:** *Intel Graphics 5500*
- **RAM:** *8GB*
- **Display:** *2 560x1 440*
- **OS:** *Windows 8.1/10*

R25 000 (Approx)

HP Spectre X360

Great performance, good battery life. Possibly the ultimate ultrabook.

Nothing is more fashionable than a laptop that can be folded in half; a feature so neat it even trumps the Macbook Air. Until Apple releases a Macbook that can pull off this party trick, manufacturers like HP and Lenovo get to lead the charge in the flexible notebook segment.

A few months ago we looked at the Lenovo Yoga 3 Pro, which has one of the most striking and durable hinges that we have ever seen. No one can declare that the Yoga 3 Pro was perfect; it simply wasn't. But it did show how far hybrid ultrabooks have come both in design if not in performance (it was hobbled by the super-low power fanless processor). HP has now stepped up to the plate with its own creation, the Spectre x360. That name is a bit of a faux pas but we will overlook it in the hopes that the x360 turns out to be the hybrid that deserves your hard earned cash.

As with all modern ultrabooks, the Spectre x360 is ultra-thin and absurdly minimalistic. An all aluminium body does mean this ultrabook is both durable and light, albeit not as light as one made out of plastic. The screen hinges are made out of metal too and allow for effortless transformation of the ultrabook to a tablet as well as ensuring that the screen does not flop like a dead fish when being used as a laptop.

Unfortunately we do not know what the overall lifespan of these hinges will be but, they do not feel like the type to give out after just a few years, even with daily transformations.

The unibody design is simply beautiful. Each half of the Spectre x360 consists of an aluminium chassis with the relevant pieces bolted on. For the top half the screen is perfectly seated into the lid which is how one expects a tablet to look. The bottom half on the other hand has the necessary back plate to allow access to all the silicon bits underneath.

Inside that aluminium frame is a full-blooded Intel Core i7-5500U processor, which means it has both the chops to handle video editing as well as being a low-voltage variant that ensures battery life doesn't take a dive.

The supporting cast for that action hero of a processor includes 8GB of RAM, a massive 512GB Samsung SSD, and the integrated Intel Graphics 5500.

By including such a high capacity SSD HP has killed four birds with one stone; the need for a high-speed drive, the need for a drive that uses very little power, the desire for consumers to have more than 128GB of storage, and your bank balance. A remarkable feat by any standards.

The Intel Graphics 5500 GPU is integrated into the processor, which means there is no extra silicon to keep cool; furthermore, while it cannot beat AMD's APUs in performance it still manages to remain beefy enough to play the odd game or two, including Battlefield 4 and GTA V. Just not on max.

PERFECT PUSHING

The keyboard is perfect. Strong words we know but the keys are firm when stabbed at like a madman but also soft at the same time. To put it simply, this keyboard will handle the brute force of a man typing but will also respond beautifully to a gentler, more feminine touch.

Topping off this beautiful little ensemble are three USB 3.0 ports, an HDMI port and a mini DisplayPort as well as an SD card reader. Last but not least there is an Intel dual-band 802.11ac WiFi adapter and Bluetooth 4.0 connectivity.

You could be forgiven for assuming that since the Spectre x360 has a proper Core i7, the battery life is dismal. After all, that processor has a TDP of 15W compared to the 4.5W of the Core M found in the Yoga 3 Pro.

Well, you'd be wrong. Yes, the Core M consumes less power but HP has worked some serious magic in the x360, chief of which is a relatively massive 56wHr battery. The Spectre x360 fails to deliver on HP's promised 12.5 hours, but in our tests got around nine hours, depending on the workload, which is enough for a full day's work.

For this almost unflawed beauty you are looking at a price tag that's anywhere from R21 100 to R25,000, depending on the exchange rate and the greediness pricing policy of your favourite online retailer. Since local pricing is not available at time of writing, this is an educated guess based on the £1 099 price tag for this particular model on HP's official web store.

Any way you slice it that's a lot of money, especially when you consider this ultrabook's niggles. But despite those you should buy it in a heartbeat, as it's closer to perfect than any Windows notebook we have ever used. **Bit.ly/1OrZUJz**

SCORES

Build Quality - 9	9
Screen - 9	9
Performance - 8	8
Battery Life - 8	8
Value for Money - 6	6
Overall	8

DETAILS

- **Display:** *5-inch, 720x1 280*
- **CPU:** *MT6592 8-core, 1.4GHz*
- **Storage:** *16GB*
- **RAM:** *2GB*
- **OS:** *Android 4.4.2*

R2 499

Innjoo One 3G HD

An affordable superphone that's better than the price suggests.

Innjoo is a new tech brand out of Dubai, and the first product in the company's phone-and-tablet lineup has hit South Africa.

It's an Android smartphone called the Innjoo One 3G HD, and it makes a memorable first impression: that of an Android phone doing its utmost to mimic the look and feel of one from another company based in Cupertino, California.

But that's by no means a bad thing; the One 3G HD's emulation of the most successful phone in the world brings the best of Android and iOS together in a single package, and what a package it is, especially considering the price of just R2 499.

Yes, really – R2 499. This incredibly-engineered phone will cost barely more than the entry-level phones we've been going gaga over for months now. It's nothing short of a miracle.

We were given early access to one ahead of its South African launch this week, and this is what we thought. For the sake of brevity, I'll call the phone the One or the Innjoo from here on in.

It's hard to pick up the One and not think of the iPhone 4. That's because the Innjoo feels quite a lot like Apple's 2013 flagship, but a flatter, leaner version that takes that phone's chamfered metal edges, metal body and overall feeling of quality and ramps everything up to 11.

Even its default home screen mimics Apple's iOS operating system with its four drawer icons and flat, smooth app icons, made possible by InnUI, Innjoo's own Android interface overlay.

SUPERSLIM BODY

The One's metal body is a very slim 6.9mm thick, weighs just 123g and supports a five-inch, 720p screen that has dedicated interface buttons instead of buttons that use up screen real estate. The power and volume rocker buttons are found along the right edge, and both are very solid and feel like they will survive hundreds of thousands of presses. Everything about the phone feels like it was considered, refined, and finally implemented only when the designers were 100% happy.

And then there's the fact that it can take two SIM cards at a time, a feature that's becoming ever-popular in phones at most price points, and that ridiculously low price becomes almost unbelievable.

So yes, the Innjoo One 3G HD makes a very good first impression indeed.

Under the hood, the One is running an eight-core Mediatek processor, the MT6592, and its graphics are powered by the Mali 450MP graphics processing unit. 2GB of system RAM ensure the phone can multitask nicely, and 16GB of internal storage – expandable with microSD cards up to 128GB – is there to store your apps and media.

On the communication side, this is the 3G version of the Innjoo One, so no LTE. There is an LTE version, but naturally it costs more.

In all, there's nothing too fancy here, but also nothing particularly bottom-rung either. At no point did we feel like the phone was sluggish, and all the 3D games we ran played beautifully smoothly. So definitely no complaints on the hardware/performance front, and especially not at this price.

BRIGHT AND COLOURFUL

The Innjoo's screen is gorgeous. Despite only being 720p, you can't see any pixels and its colours are amazing. Those colours don't wash out no matter the angle you're looking from either; they did distort, though, but only when looking from angles no human would ever need to look at a phone from so that's okay. Everything even managed to remain visible in direct sunlight.

The Innjoo One 3G HD performs like a very good mid-range phone, with perhaps the most gorgeous metal casing seen on a phone outside of one from Cupertino and internals that get the job done without being too flashy about it.

It's not going to win any prizes for the fastest anything, and that five-point touch thing puts it behind the likes of the Huawei P8, but everything else it gets right is so good that you won't mind.

And that price is nothing short of incredible. Considering how bad the rand is right now and how good the phone is, and that it can easily go head-to-head with any mid-range phone costing thousands more, makes it a very hard offer to refuse indeed. Just, wow.

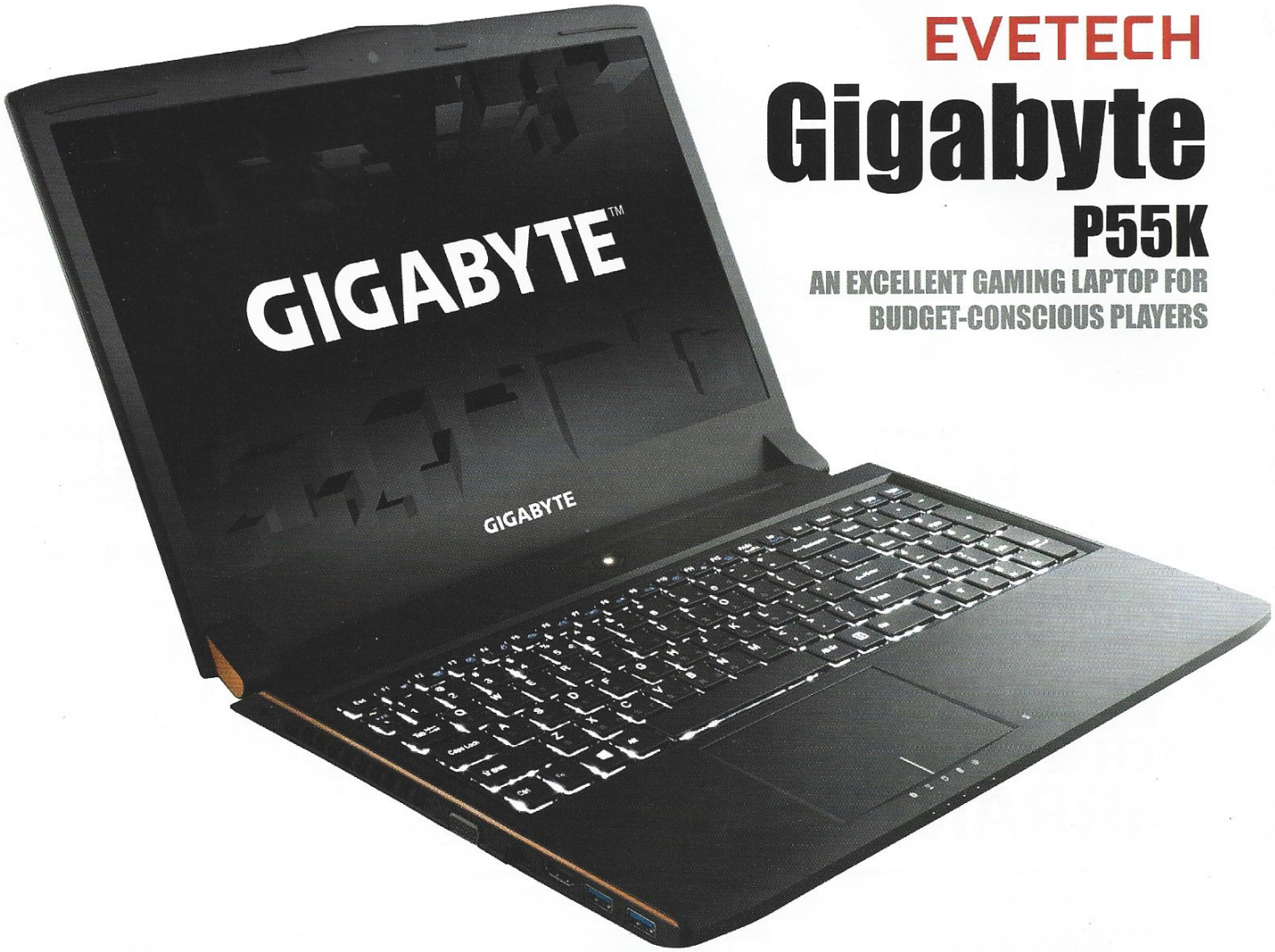
So if you're looking for a new phone, your budget is less than R3k and you want the very best Android phone you can get for that cash, picking up an Innjoo One 3G HD from Takealot when they become available for order late this month is a no brainer.

SCORES

Battery Life	7
Design	9
Performance	8
Camera	8
Display	8
Value for Money	10
Overall	8

EVETECH Gigabyte P55K

AN EXCELLENT GAMING LAPTOP FOR BUDGET-CONSCIOUS PLAYERS



One of Gigabyte's newest laptops, the Gigabyte P55K, has many amazing features laptops like the Razer Blade Pro and HP Omen have with prices you can actually afford. With great storage options, the latest graphics card and processor, and a lot of memory, this laptop is perfect for all consumers (gamers and avid computer users). Let's take a closer look at these features.

To begin, Gigabyte P55K gaming laptop supports 16GB of DDR3L RAM MAX. This much memory is seen in the highest end gaming computers like the Razer Blade Pro and Alienware laptops. The difference between the P55K and the other high end laptops is the price. For example, the Razer Blade Pro costs around R35, 000 while the P55K costs only R18, 999. With this Gigabyte laptop, storage will not be an issue also. The P55K has 1TB 7200rpm HDD and can accommodate 512GB Ulta-Fast SSD. The SSD allows for rapid storage while the HDD allows for a massive amount of storage. As you can see, Storage and Memory are not issues with the Gigabyte P55K.

A huge range of I/O ports adorn each side, with two USB 3.0 ports backed up by another two USB 2.0 ports. Three video options are provided in the form of HDMI, D-sub and a Mini-DisplayPort, allowing this thing to power basically any external display imaginable. An SD card reader is also included, along with headphone and microphone ports. Finally, Gigabit Ethernet is supplied via the single RJ-45 port.

Although memory and storage are nice features for a laptop, they are not very helpful with a slow laptop. This laptop features a 5th generation Intel Core i7 5700HQ processor. The Broadwell architecture is very well liked and occurs in most of the current systems. Broadwell allows for great performance and low power consumption. This allows the laptop to run for a long time without the need for a charge. The GPU in this system is an Nvidia GTX 965M card. Although this is not the high end chip around, it is affordable and provides great graphics still. The screen on this laptop allows the 965M to act at its best. The screen resolution is 1080p HD quality with good viewing angles.

P55K features a speedy NVIDIA GeForce GTX 965M graphics processor. A total package of 2GB VRAM handles higher frame refresh rate with ease and is capable of rendering more detailed graphics when running resource-demanding titles. Scoring P7000+ in 3DMARK 11, P55K with NVIDIA GeForce GTX 965M giving you a solid edge over other competitors in gaming.

Gigabyte P55K incorporates a backlit chiclet keyboard with key travel of 2.3 mm, perfect for gaming sessions even in the dark, and technology Gigabyte LAN Optimizer, which allows the user to manage different types of network traffic so that it flows data (such as media files in high definition, games, web browsing) may have priority over large data downloads that tend to stifle the overall bandwidth of the network.

Overall, this laptop has many of the specs a high end laptop has without the attached price they have. Available now at Evetech.co.za from R18, 999 Inc. VAT. For more info please visit the website **Bit.ly/1HsOdfC**

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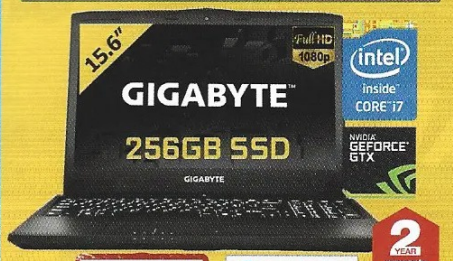

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DDR3 RAM	Hard Drive	GTX 965M

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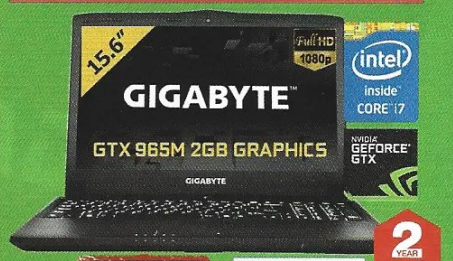

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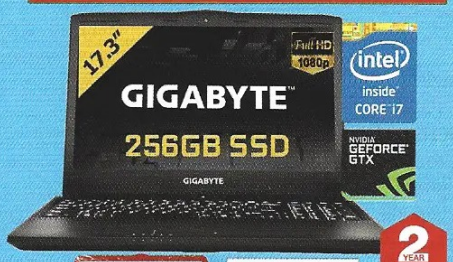

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Core i7 4720HQ 3.6Ghz, 16GB RAM, 256GB SSD 1TB HDD, GTX 850M 2GB

16,999 INCLUDING VAT

16GB	SSD+1TB	2GB
DDR3 RAM	Hard Drive	GTX 850M

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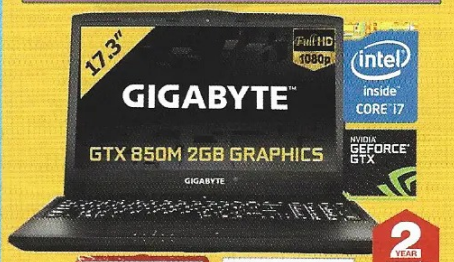
GIGABYTE P17F Core i7 Laptop



FREE DELIVERY | Windows 10 | 2 YEAR warranty

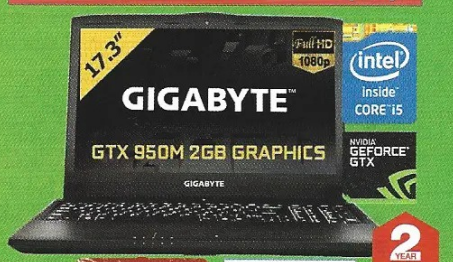
Core i7 4720HQ 3.6Ghz, 8GB RAM, Windows 8.1 1TB HDD, GTX 850M 2GB

14,499 INCLUDING VAT

16GB	1TB HDD	2GB
DDR3 RAM	Hard Drive	GTX 850M

FREE BACKPACK & GAMING MOUSE

GIGABYTE P17F Core i5 Laptop



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Huawei P8

With its latest flagship, Huawei has outdone itself. Again.

DETAILS

- **Display:** *5.2 inch, 1920×1080 resolution IPS-NEO LCD display (424ppi)*
- **Operating System:** *Android 5.0.2 Lollipop*
- **Processors:** *2GHz quad core Cortex-A53 & 1.5GHz quad core Cortex-A53*
- **Memory:** *3GB of RAM*

R6 700

In some ways the P8 looks very much like its bigger brother, the Ascend Mate 7, at least from the front. But unlike the Mate 7, the P8 does not bear the Huawei logo on its front face.

The metal body feels very iPhone-y. It's hard to not look at the P8 and feel like the Huawei design team stared at an iPhone 6 for far too long; even the back has a matte metal finish.

Interestingly, the nano SIM and SD card slots are located on the right hand side of the P8, the same side as the power button and the volume rocker. The entire front face is covered with a sheet of Gorilla Glass 3 but so is the top strip at the back, including over the camera lens which should protect the camera from daily handling.

The Mate 7 is woefully underpowered when compared to its 6-inch rivals but the P8 does not suffer from a lack of clout. Inside you'll find a 2GHz quad core Cortex-A53 and a 1.5GHz quad core Cortex-A53, and both processors dynamically adjust their frequencies depending on the workload, which helps to save battery power.

The chipset is Huawei's own HiSilicon Kirin 930 and has a Mali T628 MP4 GPU. While not as powerful as the flagship Qualcomm and Samsung chipsets, Huawei's choice has meant a lower cost to the consumer.

We ran two different rounds of AnTuTu due to the simple fact that the processors are 64-bit, which allowed us to compare 64-bit performance with 32-bit. The results were staggering.

In 32-bit mode the P8 delivers a score of 46 942 which is better than the Mate 7 but sees it fall behind last year's flagship devices. But when you unleash the full capabilities of those processors you end up with a score of 49 812.

CLEVER CARDS

The P8 also has a little party trick: the microSD card slot can serve as a secondary nano SIM card slot. To enjoy this convenience you have to forgo the extra storage space but it's a nifty little feature if you need a dual-SIM phone.

With this little feature Huawei has delivered one phone that can appeal to a larger audience.

The P8 has a 5.2-inch IPS NEO LCD display with a resolution of 1 920×1 080, which is a very complicated way of saying that the screen delivers stunning HD clarity and very vivid colours.

However, the screen is only splendid when viewed straight on. View it at an angle and it's less exciting and more average. There is a serious loss of brightness which makes the screen rather dark and unimpressive. Put another way, while you will love looking at it passers-by will be less impressed.

The P8 is not perfect. It doesn't have the latest WiFi tech – no 802.11ac here, sadly – and nor does it have a screen with more pixels than you can count, and the styling does feel a little "borrowed".

But for its price, it's amazing. Dual-SIM functionality, an amazing camera app and a decent set of processors makes the P8 very hard to resist, and as reviewers who have been using and enjoying the Mate 7 we would happily trade it in for Huawei's latest little beauty.

If you're even remotely considering the P8, we can confidently tell you to go for it, you won't regret it. **Bit.ly/1Os0GX0**

SCORES

Battery Life	9
Design	9
Performance	8
Camera	7
Display	8
Value for Money	9
Overall	8

F1 2015

Time for a new season to begin. Can you beat Lewis Hamilton to the top spot?

DETAILS

- **Platforms:** *PS4, Xbox One, PC*
- **Developer:** *Codemasters*

From R799

Mention Formula One racing to a non-fan, and it's likely they'll be able to name at least some of the more popular driving teams like McLaren, Ferrari and Red Bull.

Not only are these names regulars in the racing scene, but they are also synonymous with speed, acceleration, and burning rubber. So when it comes to developing a video game that needs to encompass all of that while still being exciting, developer Codemasters Birmingham does a fantastic job with F1 2015.

For the most part the game manages to successfully transfer the sense of speed and adrenaline you'd expect from driving one of these supercars straight to your sweaty palms as you sit on a couch. With that said, hard-core racing fanatics might find the title has a few niggles, but these want bother newbies who just want to pedal-to-the-medal and take pole position.

At first glance, the most striking aspect is the visuals. While they're not in the same class as the swoon-worthy graphics in the Forza franchise, they look pretty realistic. The stickers and details on the different car liveries and drivers' helmets are clearly visible, and you can even count the individual tread lines on the tread on the tyres.

On the flip side, there are a number of instances where the visuals just didn't seem up to scratch. As as example, the gravel next to the side of the road looks generic, and the grass can seem copy-pasted from previous titles on the odd occasion.

For the most part, it has all the bells and whistles of Formula 1, with (somewhat) realistic looking drivers, authentic cars and teams, right through to the pit stops and tyre changes.

But taking part in a race around a track isn't a quick affair – it can take up to three hours to complete. Luckily here the game provides you with the option to fine-tune most of the settings to your liking.

So is F1 2015 worth a shout? Well, that depends on what you are looking for.

Codemasters can bring racing games to life in the most amazing ways – just take the first DiRT game as an example – but this title just hasn't got the creativity and ingenuity required to make it a title that will have your tyres stuck to the tarmac for weeks, or even months.

One thing that has been missing from the series is co-op racing, which would allow you to take part in a little local friendly competition. It might add a bit of longevity to a title that is in desperate need of it.

Something that also needs to be developed better are the crash physics. Bits of debris go flying when two cars collide, but collisions are nowhere near as spectacular as in real life. Naturally the damage can be set to full, cosmetic, or turned off completely.

If you are the occasional Formula One enthusiast that is looking for a quick game to emulate some of the most heated races in history, then F1 2015 will be perfect for you. If you are looking for a game that will give you the same experience as Forza Motorsport but with track racing, then you better look elsewhere. **Bit.ly/1eQ0vrH**

SCORES

Graphics	8
Driving mechanics	7
Driver likenesses	8
Longevity	7
Overall	7

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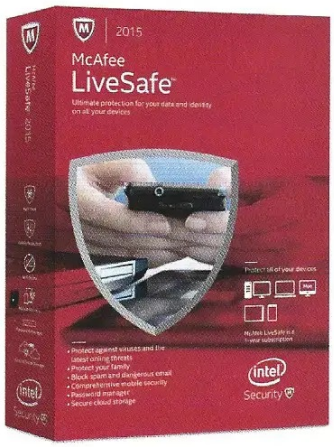

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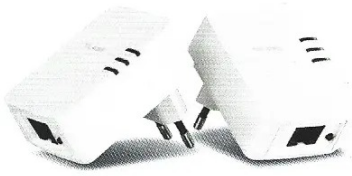

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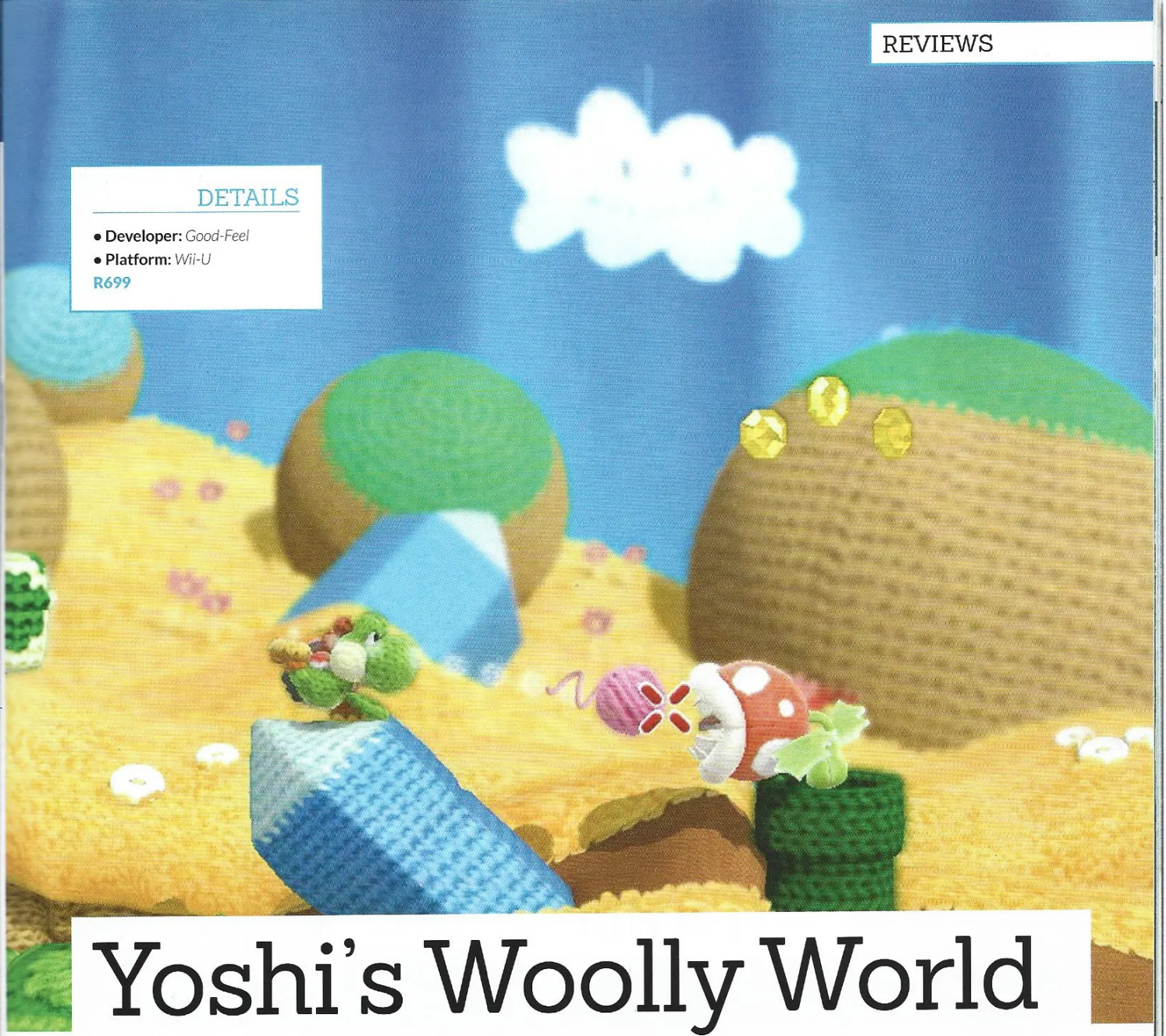


DETAILS

- **Developer:** *Good-Feel*
- **Platform:** *Wii-U*

R699

Yoshi's Woolly World

A game about knitted stuff feels a bit sheepish.

With its characters and environments shot through with a gorgeous patchwork aesthetic of cloth and yarn, Yoshi's Woolly World's demands your undivided attention on its presentation alone. In fact, the visuals are so beautiful it's almost a sin to play it using the Wii U's GamePad screen.

Yoshi (full name T. Yoshisaur Munchakoopas) is one of the more prominent members of the Mushroom Kingdom. Since the character's debut around 25 years ago in the simply titled Game Boy title, Yoshi, the green dinosaur has appeared in dozens of games alongside Nintendo's iconic mustachioed artisan plumber.

Herein lies the first challenge we had with Yoshi's Woolly world, for as much as we enjoyed the cuteness of the levels, and the responsiveness of the controls (which is miles ahead of platformers like LittleBigPlanet), we couldn't shake off the nagging feeling that this was an old ride with a new lick of paint.

The game offers up a heap of collectibles but not all of them feel very worthwhile. It's enjoyable and rewarding to hunt down balls of wool hidden throughout the levels because players are rewarded for it – with, for example, a new Yoshi (in colours that rival a big bag of Jelly Belly candy beans). But a lot of the other collectables feel like more of a chore and unnecessary padding. Needless to say, we didn't spend too much time on them.

We had fun with Yoshi's Woolly World, but we can't help but feel that in spite of its jaw-dropping visuals and Nintendo trademark gameplay it's more of a familiar comfort , than a bold step forward for platformers.

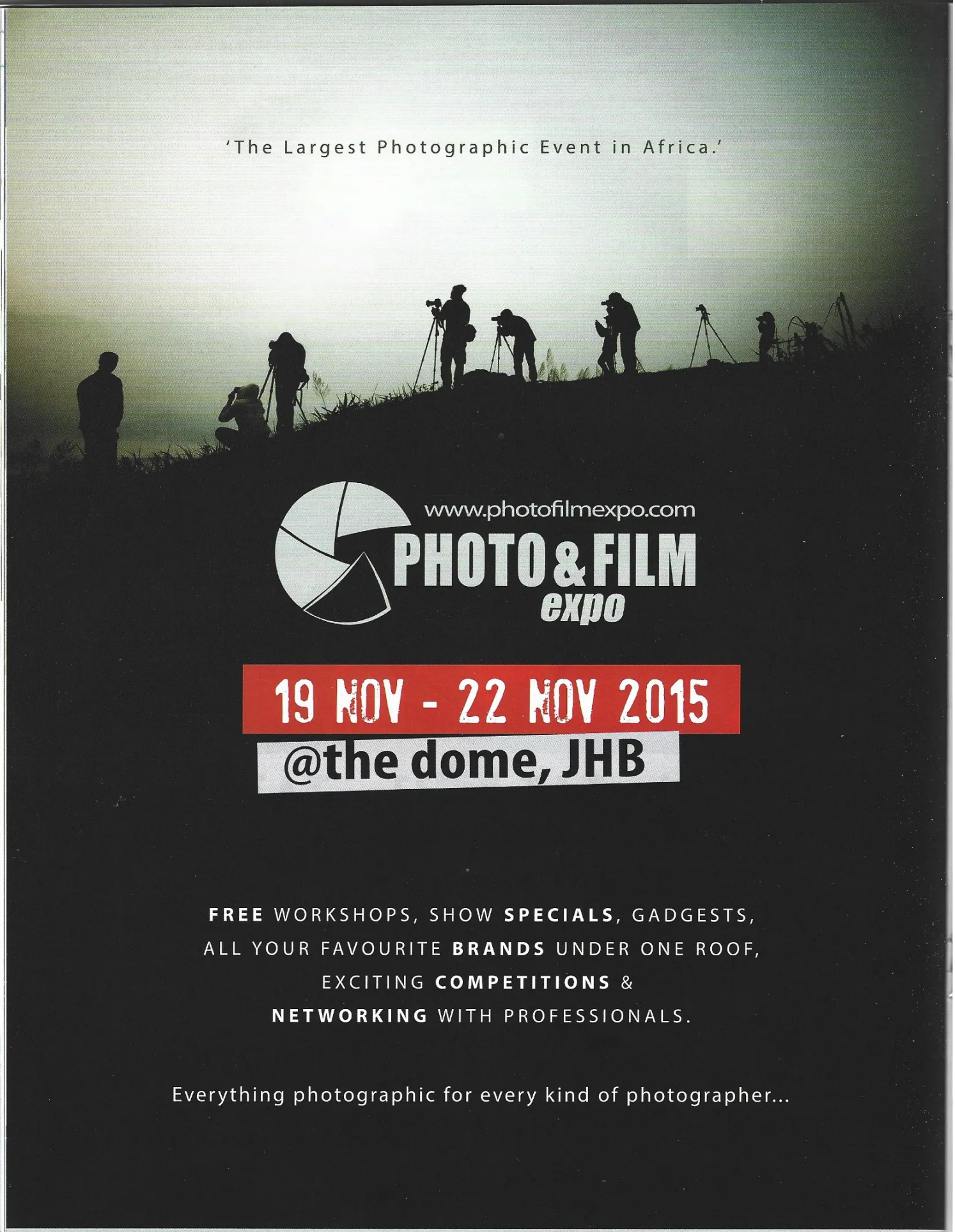
In the age of indie platformers that offer new gameplay mechanics, and short, inexpensive thrills, a Yoshi title has to work a lot harder to impress.

We would recommend Yoshi's Woolly World to people who enjoyed Kirby's Epic Yarn, and to those seeking an easier challenge to the Wii U's Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze. Just don't expect it to blow your collective socks off.

Bit.ly/1D2ERw5

SCORES

Graphics	10
Gameplay	6
Music	8
Originality	8
Overall	8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CAMERA TEST:

iPhone 6 versus Samsung Galaxy S6

Which smartphone is the better snapper?

Apple's iPhone camera has been the best in the business for the past few years, many devices have challenged it and have always found themselves on the loosing side. The iPhone 6 took this one step further with one of the best smartphone cameras the world has ever seen. The iPhone's low megapixel count compared to rivals means absolutely nothing, as we've seen proven time and time again. Photos captured on the 6 are simply stunning.

But with the launch of the Galaxy 6 range, Samsung has come back fighting in a big way, producing a smartphone camera that stands toe-to-toe with the Apple. Samsung has slightly tweaked the setup used for the Note 4 and dropped it into the S6. The result being a camera that produces sharp and vibrant images

So which is better? Check out our comparison below.

COLOUR

While both devices handle colour, light and shadows very well, the S6 manages colour very differently to the iPhone 6, the images tend to be warmer with emphasis on reds and yellows. While the iPhone 6's images tend to have a more natural blue and green white balance.

What this means is that outdoor the iPhone will render much more natural looking images, with blue skies and green grass. While the images from the S6 will look a little too oversaturated, especially if there is red or yellow in the image. But this really does come down to personal preference.

OUTDOORS

Outdoors in a "bad lighting" situation the Galaxy S6 once again outguns the iPhone 6, producing slightly sharper images, with a little more detail. However, the iPhone's focusing in these conditions is way faster and does what you ask it to.

INDOORS

Indoors the iPhone definitely handles the mix of natural, fluorescent and incandescent light better than the S6, producing much more "natural" looking images. While the S6 produces images with more detail, the overly warm white balance results in a less eye-pleasing image overall.

When we come to low light, the iPhone 6 streaks ahead, it can keep its shutter open longer, up to ¼ second and also limits the ISO to 500, with little apparent grain. The S6 tries to find a balance between exposure time and sensitivity and images produced are not only more grainy than the iPhone, but once again because of the white balance issue they tend to look worse than they should.

OTHER FEATURES

Where the Galaxy S6 steps up to the plate in a big way is in macro photography and cropping. If you take an equal crop of an identical iPhone and Samsung image, it's clear just how much more detail is captured from the 16MP rear sensor on the Galaxy S6: letters are more legible, and there is considerably less grain. The iPhone does not even come close.

The Galaxy S6's F1.9 lens makes it one of the only smartphones that can really play with depth of field. While it may not be to everyone's taste, but the effect with macro shots is fantastic.

CONCLUSION

Both manufacturers have produced really great smart phone cameras, and both of them perform better than the other in different situations. This makes determining a "winner" much harder than it used to be when Apple was way ahead of the bunch.

In the end, looking at the market from a consumer's point of view, and not a professional photographer, the Samsung has more features and modes available, compared to the Apple and many users will be drawn to this. So, we have to give it to the Galaxy S6, but by the very slightest of margins.

Four challenges that will make you a better photographer

Push yourself with these simple photo exercises.

Every photographer, whether you are a pro or someone who is just starting out, hits the proverbial creative brick wall. It has happened to the best of us, and it could be serious enough to make you put your camera down and stop shooting.

Instead of doing that, rather pick up your camera and force yourself to start looking at the world you photography in a new way, challenge yourself to do something different. While there are many ways to do this, the best way is to set yourself some challenges. This can be done on your own or even with a group of photographer friends.

HERE'S FOUR IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED.

RESTRICT YOURSELF

Because photography has become so much cheaper over the past few years, most of us have now access to decent cameras, multiple lenses and a host of other toys all on our phones. As anyone who's remembers the original Star Wars before it became a CGI mess, dealing with limitations unleashes creativity – when there's no limit there's no imagination.

So restrict yourself by taking away some of the convenience offered to the modern photographer. You'll be amazed at the results. Here's eight ideas to get you thinking.

- Use only one prime lens, or shoot only at one focal length on a zoom lens.
- Switch over to Black and White in camera and only shoot that.
- Shoot only between a certain time of the day, and preferably when the light is not great.
- Pick a certain aperture and only use, this will really challenge you to try new things.
- Only use the spot-metering mode on your camera.
- Frame images so that your subject only takes up a quarter of the image.
- Use only reflections in your images.
- Cover your LCD screen with tape or something and don't look at any of your images until you download them. This will force you to concentrate on what you are shooting, not what you have shot.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

This is a fun project and you won't have to go anywhere specific to do it.

Pick an item and carry it everywhere with you for a whole day. Shoot images wherever you are and make sure you include that item in all of the images. Try to position the item in different parts of your frame every time you take a picture. You will start to notice how it dictates framing and composition. Don't be scared to get creative with the placement of your item.

DOUBLE DIRTY DOZEN

Go somewhere: the park, a shopping centre or a random street corner. Anywhere will do for this one because it is not about the place, it is about what you are going to force yourself to see while you are there. Pick a spot and plant your feet, you may only stand in one spot. Now, shoot 24 individual images while standing there, you may not move your feet at all.

This is most probably the most difficult of these exercises and it will push your creativity and understanding of your gear to a point where you most probably have never been. It will teach you to truly see what is around you.

SHOOT "FILM"

Pick one of your favourite places; somewhere have enjoyed making images in the past. But this time pretend that you are shooting film in your digital camera. In other words, you are only allowed to take 24 or 36 "exposures" and then you have to stop because you are out of film.

Make sure you look and think before releasing the shutter button, because you only have a certain amount of images before you run out. This should help you to make better decisions about what you shoot; it will encourage you not just to shoot everything you see.

Bit.ly/1HVsQY6

SHOW US YOURS?

Had a go at any of these exercises? Be sure to let us see the results by visiting our forum at forum.htxt.co.za. We'll have four more challenges to stretch your photo muscles next month.

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How to take star trail pics

Looking for something to do when you're loadshed? Try this.

We all hate it, that feeling of utter helplessness when we are sitting at home getting ready to watch our latest show and bang, there goes the power. The moans from across the neighbourhood ring out as we all let out a cry of desperation as we sit in the darkness. This is made even worse as your neighbours' generator kicks into life.

What are you supposed to do for the next two to four hours with nothing to do?

As a photographer this is the perfect time to get out your gear and play. Another challenge through which you can improve your art. Why not use the darkness to get an amazing pic of star trails, like this.

The biggest problem with living in a city is that the ambient light makes it pretty much impossible to shoot star trails. Street lighting will almost certainly overexpose your images to such an extent that they are going to look really bad.

Loadshedding eliminates this issue, because there is now no ambient light.

Wp.me/p3AMiX-j5k

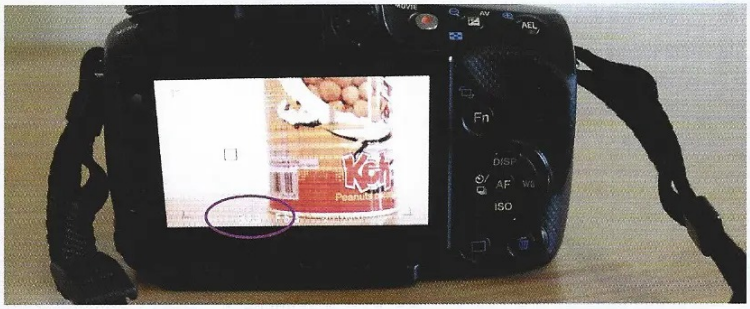
SEE HOW IT'S DONE.

How to take star trail pics

1 To shoot star trails you will need the following; a camera capable of manual focus, manual exposure and a tripod. You'll want a cable release too – this will let you open the shutter of the camera without touching it and causing it to wobble. Many modern cameras have infra-red remotes or smartphone apps that will give you the same control though.

2 When the power goes off and there's a reasonably clear night sky, set your camera to Manual Mode (M). Open the aperture up wide: somewhere between F4.0 and F5.6 should do. Then increase the shutter speed – past the normal 125, 250 etc right up past 1", onwards past 30" until the display shows Bulb.

Bulb mode allows you to control how long the shutter opens manually. So long as you're holding the shutter release down, the shutter stays open.



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3 Play around with your white balance till you get something that you like, in urban areas Tungsten is a good idea because even if most of the lights are out, there will still be a little bit of light pollution. Using Tungsten will cool your colour to a blue tone.

Next up, set the sensitivity of your camera. Ideally, this should be as low as possible to minimise noise in the frame and keep your star trails sharp. Go for ISO100 if you can.

4 The last thing you need to worry about is noise reduction; many of the newer cameras have a long exposure noise reduction function. This takes another frame immediately after a long exposure, without opening the shutter. This is a "Dark Frame" and this image is subtracted from the exposed frame to supposedly give you a perfect exposure. This is a time consuming process because the "dark frame" takes as long as the first exposure, so if you made an hour exposure, then it would take another hour for the dark frame. The big problem here is that the lights could come back on and ruin your image completely. Go into your menu and turn this feature off, you don't need it.

5 The tricky part here is holding down the shutter release long enough to capture the movement of the night sky. Twenty minutes is OK, an hour is better. So you may want to use some tape to hold down the release while you go back inside. Just remember not to walk in front of the camera.

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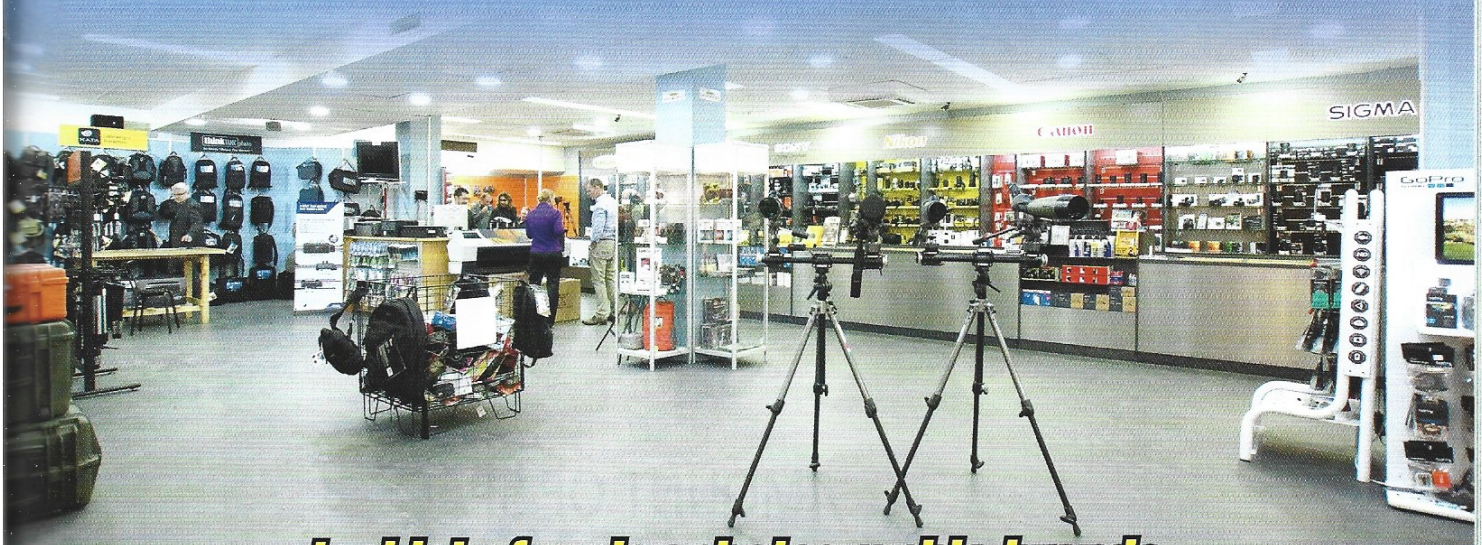

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GET THE... ULTIMATE GAMING SETUP

Transform your home into the world's best playroom with our guide to the latest gamer gear, by Deon Du Plessis.

Playing games has been a big part of my life for over 25 years, and I love it. In that time I've played many, many titles across a large number of platforms and amassed surprisingly large libraries both digital and physical.

I've also spent a small fortune upgrading my PC, buying consoles, getting bigger and better TVs, improving my sound system and basically doing whatever it takes to make my gaming life ever-better and more comfortable.

I have not yet created the ultimate gaming setup, but honestly that's a moving goal that I don't think is actually achievable. The key for me is to be happy with what I have, expand when I can afford it and keep dreaming, and that I am pleased to say I am most certainly doing.

So what is this gaming thing of which I speak? That is what I will show you over the next few pages, touching on such important topics as "PC vs. Console" and "4K vs. 1080p" in order to give you an idea of the current state of the hobby, and the sort of questions you'll need to answer for yourself if you're interested in getting involved.

PLAYSTATION VS. XBOX ONE

Sony's PlayStation 4 and Microsoft's Xbox One are the big games consoles around today, and choosing between them is something gamers who can't afford both will need to do.

I've found that choice often comes down to the exclusive games available on each platform, and the final decision should only be made once the potential gamer has done some research.

Microsoft tends to be stronger when it comes to racing games, with its Forza Motorsport series top with fans of games that simulate the real-life racing experience, plus it throws money at Activision to get Call of Duty games first every year, so if that's your bag, an Xboner is you.

Sony, on the other hand, is more willing to take risks with its exclusives, giving gamers unique titles like Until Dawn, The Last of Us and No Man's Sky that all look incredible and have a heart and soul that's seldom found elsewhere.

MULTIPLAYER

Both consoles require you to pay an annual subscription fee if you want to play their games with other people on the internet, which PCs don't. Right now 12 months of Xbox Live Gold will cost you R465, while a year of PlayStation Plus goes for something ridiculous like R800.

Fortunately you'll get free games for your cash: Microsoft gives away two free Xbox One games a month that are yours to keep forever (even if you cancel your Gold membership), while PlayStation Plus grants you free access to an ever-changing library of PlayStation games, as long as your subscription is active.

In an ideal world, gamers should own both consoles so they can play all exclusives, but that's not exactly practical. Choosing the one that's right for you is a big decision, therefore, and I encourage you to do your own homework before choosing.

Personally, I use my Xbox One more than my PlayStation 4, but that's because I much prefer Microsoft's Achievements and Gamerscore system that awards me points for doing things in-game to Sony's silly bronze, silver, gold and platinum trophy system that means nothing to me.

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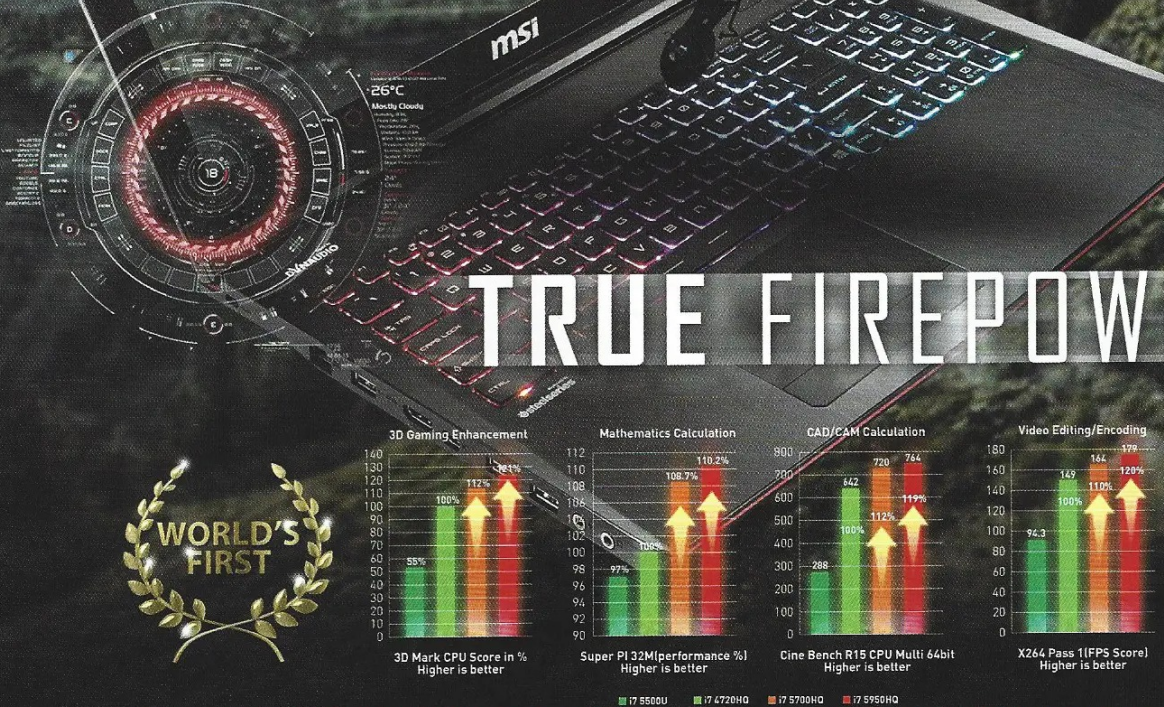

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CONSOLE OR PC GAMING?

First things first: Do you go for a PlayStation/Xbox or do you build a gaming PC? My answer? Go console.

Yes, there is a greater variety of games to enjoy on PC and it has the best graphics of any platform, but trust me, building up a PC in order to play games is a complicated, stressful and expensive process, more so if you've never done it before.

The alternative of buying one that's powerful enough to run games as they're meant to be played can cost you a lot more than a console will – we're talking two or even three times as much – so it's not a great idea either. Unless paying R18k for a gaming PC doesn't bother you, that is.

Buying a games console, on the other hand, is a matter of plonking down your cash, grabbing a few games, hooking everything up to your TV and simply playing.

At the moment a PlayStation 4 or Xbox One will cost you around R6k, and if you find the right deal (*cough* FNB *cough*) you can even get games and extra controllers thrown in for around that sum, and pay it all off over two years.

Basically, a games console will let you get into gaming really quickly, and if you're just interested in dabbling, is the best place to start. Once you get a taste for it and some experience under your belt, I'm more than confident you'll feel compelled to explore the world of PC gaming, much like a kid who loves his bicycle inevitably checks out a Harley.

CONSOLES PROS

- Cheaper than PC
- Incredibly easy to set up
- Insert game disc, play

CONSOLES CONS

- Less game variety (not a lot of strategy or turn-based games)
- Require annual paid subscriptions for some features
- Console games are expensive – expect to pay R799 on average each

PC PROS

- Huge variety of very cheap games to buy and play from every genre
- Games look their best on PC
- Play across more than one monitor
- No annual subscriptions needed to play multiplayer
- Some games control better with a keyboard and mouse

PC CONS

- Complicated to build and maintain
- Hardware is much more expensive

HOW MUCH? PC VS XBOX ONE VS PLAYSTATION 4 COSTS

PC

- **Tower (where all the bits go):** R12 000 and up
- **Keyboard:** R300 and up
- **Mouse:** R600 for a gaming mouse
- **Speakers:** R200 and up
- **Headset:** R300 and up
- **Multiplayer:** R0, unless you play an MMO with a monthly subscription
- **Total:** R13 400+

Xbox One

- **Console & Controller:** R5 499
- **Kinect 2.0 (Optional):** R2 499
- **Extra Controller:** R800
- **Xbox Live Gold 12-month membership:** R465
- **Total:** R9 363 with Kinect, R6 864 without

PlayStation 4

- **Console & controller:** R6 299
- **PlayStation Camera (optional):** R800
- **Extra Controller:** R800
- **PlayStation Plus 12 months:** R800
- **Total:** R8 699 with camera, R7 899 without

TV TELEMETRY

Once you've made the choice of which console to game on, the console itself becomes secondary to the TV you hook it up to, as that's what you'll be staring at for hours on end.

55-inch Full HD screens are quite cheap these days – you can pick one up for less than R10k if you shop around enough – and they are, in my experience, simply brilliant for console games. Since you'll be sitting between 2 and 2.5m away from it, blemishes in your game's presentation are less noticeable, and it's big enough that you'll feel like you're gaming like a boss. I know I do.

Should you wish to go bigger, by all means, just keep in mind that on screens larger than 55 inches, console graphics start to look a bit the worse for wear.

4K VS 1080P

Quite frankly, you don't need a 4K TV – that is, a TV with a resolution that's four times higher than a regular 1080p set. At this point, nobody does; they're expensive, and you've probably noticed you can't just pop down to the shops and buy 4K versions of your favourite movies quite yet.

YouTube is the best source of 4K videos, at the moment, but you need a good internet connection and a lot of data to watch them as 4K videos are huge.

But should you take the plunge, 4K TVs do something called "1080p upscaling", which is a bit of technical wizardry that makes 1080p videos look just a bit sharper. So there's that. But while it's nice to have, you'll be just fine sticking with a 1080p screen.

SURROUND SOUNDSCAPE

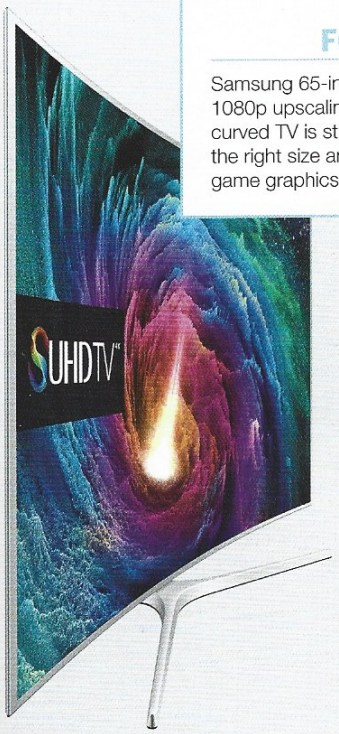
Don't underestimate just how effective sound is at immersing you in the fantasy universes of your games. There's nothing quite like hearing the "fwing!" of a ricocheting bullet to get your heart going in Call of Duty and Battlefield's more intense moments, or thinking you hear the steps of the xenomorph that's hunting you in Alien: Isolation coming from behind you thanks to a decent surround sound setup.

Both consoles support Dolby technology, meaning you can hook them up to any Dolby-compatible home entertainment system with a simple HDMI connection and be enveloped in your game's sounds. PCs, too, support various surround technologies, which will bring your games to life in ways that good graphics alone just can't.

ULTIMATE CONSOLE GAMING ROOM

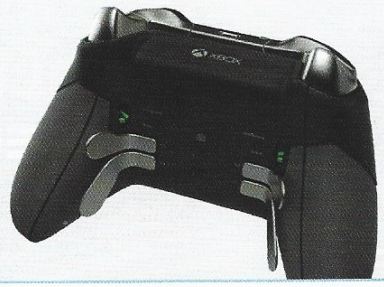
Here's where a bit of dreaming comes in. If I had to kit out my console gaming room from scratch, with a bit of a budget, this is totally how I'd do it:

PlayStation 4/Xbox One. Pick your platform, and prepare for war.



FOR YOUR EYES

Samsung 65-inch Ultra HD TV with 1080p upscaling – R70k. This gorgeous curved TV is stunningly huge, exactly the right size and resolution to have your game graphics looking their best.



FOR YOUR HANDS

Think your current controller is cool? Microsoft has released an Elite controller for the Xbox One R2 000) that adds flappy paddles to the back for even finer control, and you can make the analogue sticks super comfortable with KontrolFreek's FPS Phantom buttons (R489), which are also available for the PS4.

FOR YOUR BOTTOM

Comfy reclining chair with extendable leg rest – R5k. Sometimes, simple is indeed best. Grab yourself a reclining chair with a foot rest from any furniture retailer, and prepare to game in comfort and style.

FOR YOUR EARS

This surround-sound setup consisting of Jamo S428HCS3 5.1 speakers (R7 000) and Yamaha's RXV577 amplifier (R8 900) means sound will come at you from all angles.

FOR YOUR *FANCY* BOTTOM

Sci Ryder (R18k). This custom-made gaming chair suits both console and PC gamers alike with its inclined chiropractor-approved seat, adjustable headrest, a keyboard/controller platform, speaker rests and several ways to hang a screen (or three) in front of your face. Having tried it at last year's rAge, I can say it's very comfortable indeed.

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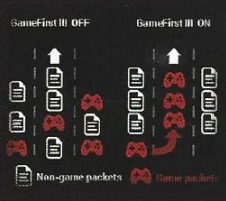

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NOW AVAILABLE AT

Incredible CONNECTION

Can you game on Telkom's LTE-A?

We put the latest home broadband tech to the ultimate test.

Playing multiplayer games online in South Africa has always been a struggle. Hitting the top of the leaderboard in a fast first-person shooter relies on having a low latency connection to the server – it doesn't matter if you've got a 100Mbps download speed if the delay on the line is enough milliseconds for an opponent to shoot you before you even see them appear.

Latency is the measurement of the time it takes (in milliseconds) for a packet of data to reach you from a server. It's a different measurement to bandwidth, which is just about how much data can be sent per second. Getting 100Mbps download speeds is nice, but for a gamer if that 100Mb was sent 100ms ago, it's 10 times worse than if it was sent 10ms ago. Latency, not download speed, is king.

Games like Counter-Strike, Battlefield and Call of Duty all rely on low-latency connections to their servers to keep the action ticking over at the required pace. Traditionally, wireless connections, like Edge and 3G can't hold a match to the latency of fixed line ADSL or fibre - there's just too much interference and dodgy reception to play fast games over a mobile broadband connection.

But what about the latest technologies, namely LTE and LTE-A? Sure, they promise loads of bandwidth over the air - over 150Mbps in fact - but can they compare to fixed lines for games?

You'd hope so, because not only is LTE and LTE-A now offering much faster connectivity for web browsing and media streaming – 150Mbps if you're lucky – the ease with which LTE can be deployed and the astonishingly low cost of Telkom's latest offer makes it so competitive against fixed lines (R599 a month uncapped versus a thousands bucks or more for fibre) it may actually mean the growth of fibre to the home (FTTH) services is slowed down in areas that don't have it yet.

Typically, LTE has a bad rap for gaming – not only is there more latency but it tends to be spikier too. In other words, the quality of service isn't as consistent when data is sent over the air rather than via a cable. But then, like most bits of assumed knowledge it's been a long time since we actually benchmarked an LTE connection to see if it's still true. And we've certainly never tried one of those new fangled LTE-A services out.

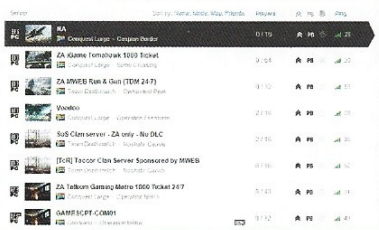
Until now. **Bit.ly/1SH1Wew**

THE RESULTS

Here's what we compared:

- 4Mbps ADSL circuit of capped, unshaped data from Axxess
- LTE modem with 100GB of Telkom data pre-loaded
- LTE-A modem with uncapped data (Telkom's R599pm special offer)
- Kick-ass gaming PC connected to each modem with a CAT5 network cable (to avoid any additional latency caused by a WiFi connection)
- The LTE-A connection was tested in Highlands North, while LTE was tested in Bryanston with good signal at both spots.

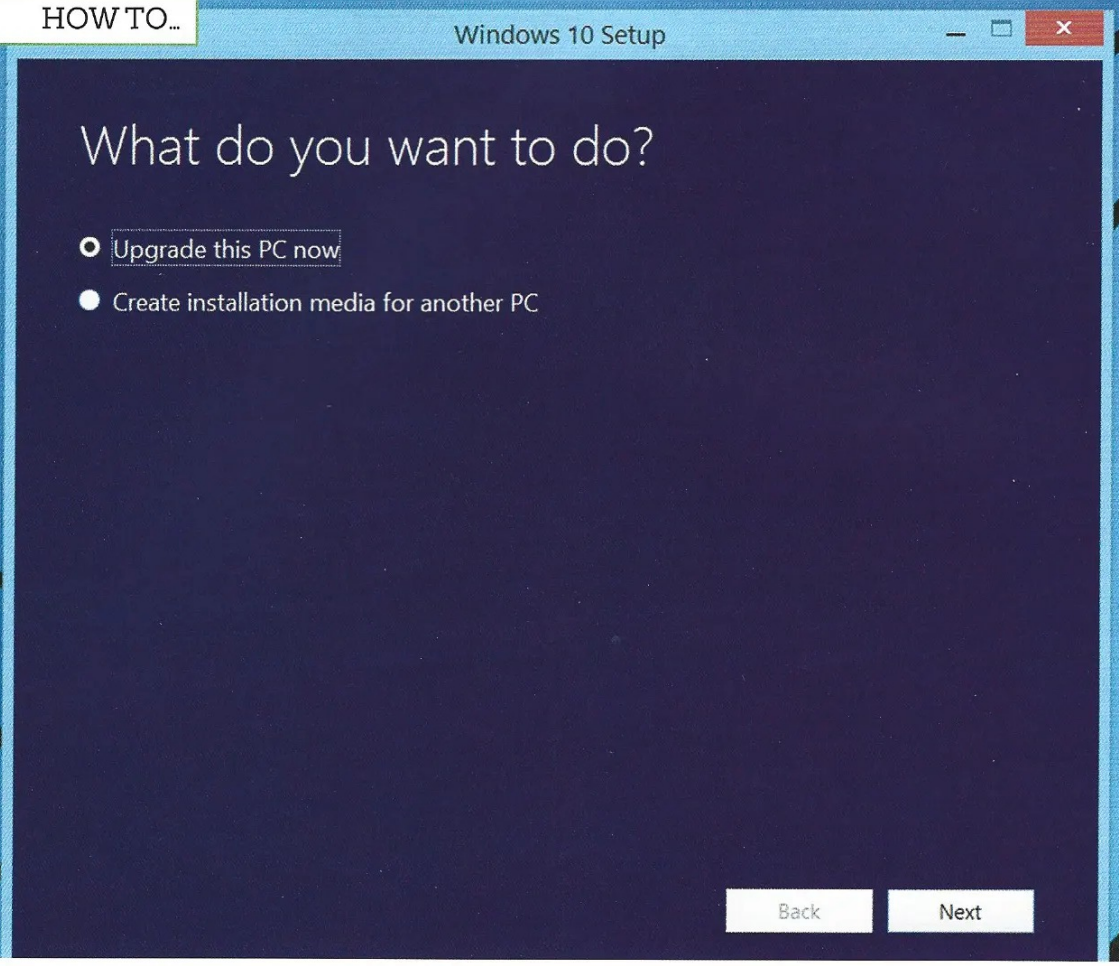
Ping times to local Battlefield 3 and Battlefield 4 servers



conclusion

So there you have it, LTE-A does seem to help the latency somewhat. There's a caveat, our results might well be attributed to the fact that in Highlands North - where we tested LTE-A - we were much closer to the Telkom mast than in Bryanston, and that there's almost certainly fewer users of Telkom's services there too. What we've shown is that you can game on LTE-A, but not necessarily that it works in every case. Try and get Telkom to test your home before you front up for a contract.

By the way, we also tested the ping time to European servers and found all to be barely playable 232ms or more.



Install Windows 10 today

Still waiting for your free Windows upgrade? Here's how to get it to your PC today.

Software giant Microsoft released the latest version of its desktop operating system, Windows 10, to the public at the end of July. The good news is that if you're running a legitimate copy of Windows 7 or 8, you can download this update to Windows 10 for free.

The bad news is that Microsoft has been trying to stagger downloads over the course of a month in order to ease pressure on its servers. But if you're still waiting for Windows 10 to arrive on your machine, here's how to get it today.

HOW TO GRAB YOUR UPGRADE EARLY

1. First, go here: **http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10**.
2. This page provides links to a download tool that will do everything for you. Simply choose which version of Windows 10 you want – 32-bit or 64-bit – download the 18MB file, and once it's down double-click it.
3. That opens Microsoft's Windows 10 setup tool, and now all you need to do is click "Upgrade this PC now" which will start the download. You'll need to have
4. Once the Windows 10 data is downloaded, the tool will update your Windows 7/8/8.1 PC automatically to Windows 10. And that's it, you're done.

CLEAN INSTALL

Now, if you want a clean installation of the OS, all you need to do is go into your Settings on your shiny new Windows 10 installation and choose "Reset PC". This will remove all programs and data and give you a nice, clean installation of Windows 10 to work with.

Once Windows has been reset, you'll be taken through an initial setup process during which you'll be asked for your product key, which you won't have since you're taking Microsoft up on its free upgrade offer.

To get past this, simply click "Skip" every time you're asked, and your PC will activate itself automatically once it goes online.

Bit.ly/1HnruBv

SINGLE DOWNLOAD, MULTIPLE UPGRADES

If you like the idea of upgrading to Windows 10 manually but you have several PCs you want to do it on and you don't want to have to download 4GB of data for every one, there's a way to download Windows 10's files once, and use it to upgrade as many qualifying PCs as you have.

To do that grab the download tool from the link above and run it, but instead of Upgrade this PC, click "Create installation media for another PC".

You'll need to have an 8GB USB drive handy for this, or the ability to create a DVD using an ISO file. I recommend the USB drive route as it's a lot easier, plus it caters for laptops and tablets that don't have DVD drives.

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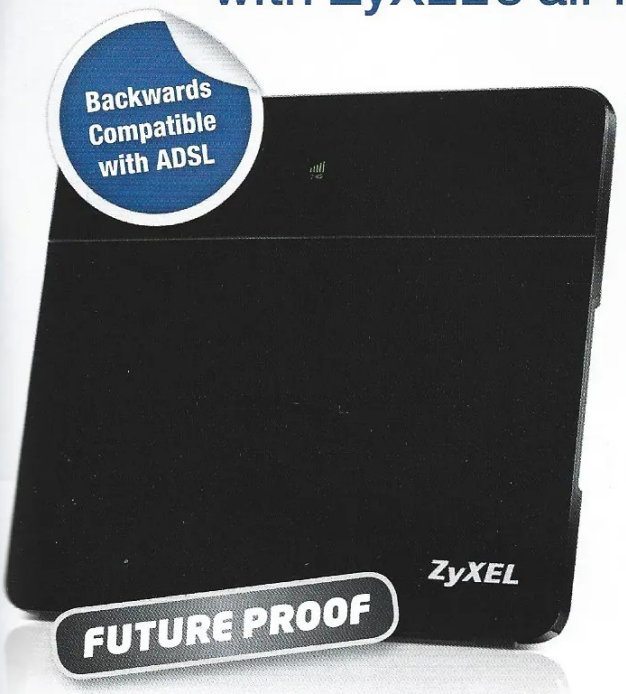

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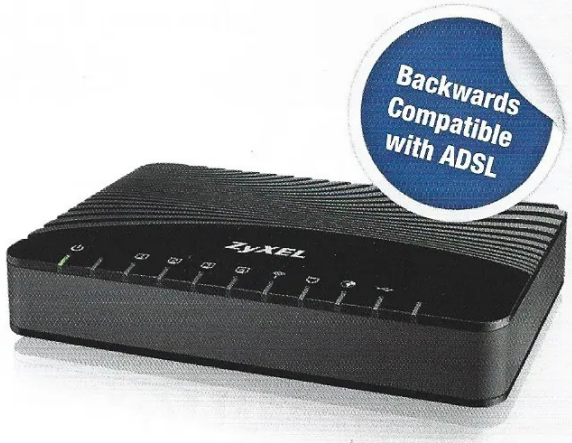

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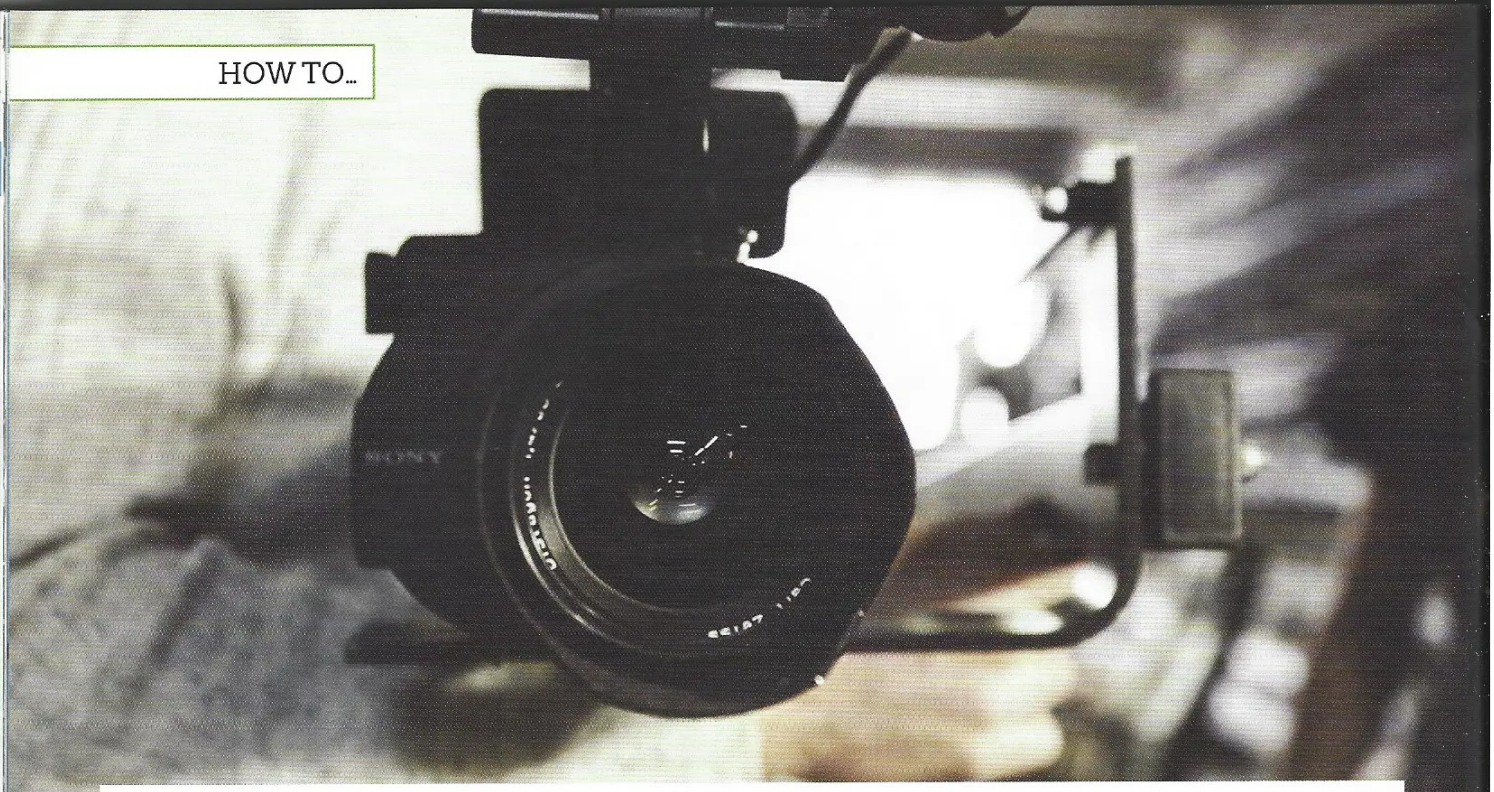


Get the creative job you want

Sharpen your CV and stand out from the crowd.

Creative people run on a different frequency to those the rest of the world deems "normal". The creatively inclined person has a mind that functions in a different way, they look at the world through different eyes, they see beauty in the tiniest of details and they approach life from multiple angles. Does that sound like you?

If it does you've probably wondered how somebody like you should prepare themselves for, and behave during an interview. The chances are good that you're a bit outside of the mainstream, that you think and act differently to others around you in the working world and this might pose a few problems when you're interviewing for a position.

PUT YOUR CV TOGETHER

If you're a designer, a writer, an actor, a model or any other profession that exists in the creative fields you're going to want to make your CV shine. The boring "Name Surname CV 2015.docx" is not going to cut. These days even a well done presentation or PDF is probably not the best you can do. Use your strong, creative brain and combine it with the skills you have to make something memorable.

For example, if you're a web designer make your CV an interactive web page. This is your first impression, give it some wallop.

RESEARCH THE COMPANY AND THE POSITION

Before you even make contact with the company, do some research. Decide for yourself if this is a company you would like to work for and determine exactly why it is you want to work for that company. Make note of this when the company calls you or in the initial email to the company. Remember that the company is looking for a person that fits into the company culture in addition to being the right person for the job.

THE INTERVIEW PREP

So your persistent contact with the company got you the opportunity to go for an interview. Before you start to stress yourself into a tight ball of confusion take a breath and start preparing yourself for the interview. Take the time to write down a list of your strengths, weaknesses and things you cannot do.

You may have already listed your strengths in your CV but very often you'll be asked about what your weaknesses are and "I don't have any" is not a good answer. Rather be upfront and tell people exactly what you love doing, what you hate doing and what you're willing to learn to do, if you're so inclined. Dress respectably and make sure you look neat. If you aren't a suit and tie sort of person then don't wear a suit and tie, you don't want to create an expectation that you can't uphold.

THE ACTUAL INTERVIEW

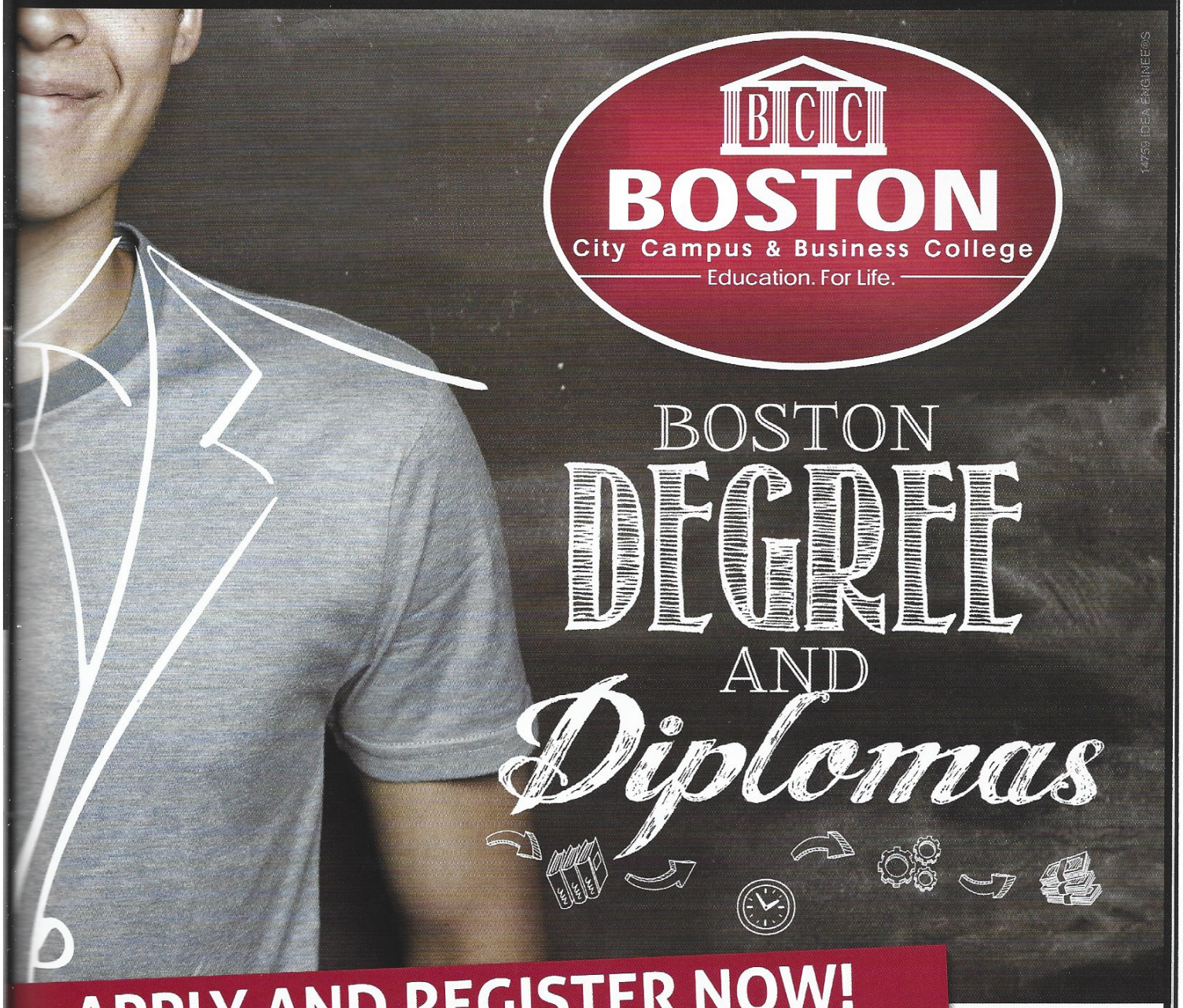
The day before the interview you'll want to check where exactly the location of your interview will be. Check the distance and think about what time you're going to be traveling and the areas you'll be passing through. Make sure you are at least 15 minutes early for the interview, arriving right on time or late does count against you believe it or not. Bring a hardcopy of your CV and your portfolio along with you if possible.

During the interview you're going to be asked a number of "normal" questions where the interviewer will try to get more detail about the information you put in your CV. Elaborate where you need to but don't go overboard. Beware the questions that catch you unawares, the ones you didn't prepare for. These questions are designed to shell shock you and reveal more about your personality. The best advice we can give is, be yourself. Don't try to decode the question looking for a hidden meaning because nine times out of ten there isn't one. Answer the question as if you are talking with your friends at the weekend, this question is designed to show just that.

After the interview try not to phone the company everyday to find out if you got the job. The interviewer will generally let you know how long they will need to make a decision, if they don't, ask them.

And that's about it. Other than the tips above be honest, be confident and out your best foot forward.

Now, go forth and create your future.



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Get your hands on Sony's massively upgraded new games console

It seems like only yesterday that current gen consoles were still "next gen", but time flies faster than you think and Sony is already prepping an update to its market leading PlayStation 4.

The new console is physically identical to the old, except that the internal hard drive is upgraded to a whopping 1TB of storage, and it launches worldwide on July 15th. It'll cost just under R6 000 when it lands here, but one lucky reader will be able to get one for free.

That's because the lovely folk at Sony South Africa have given us here at Tech Made Easy one to give away. Now we know that this is a particularly special prize, because PlayStation is so well-loved by South Africans, so we're going to ask you to do something special in order to try and win it.

We want you to make a video telling us exactly why you deserve to win this awesome console. The more demonstrative your plea, the better. Chances are higher that the winner will also make us laugh (but will still be suitable for family viewing).

We don't want long videos, what we want is Instagram selfie vids that are no more than 15 seconds in length. The rules are simple:

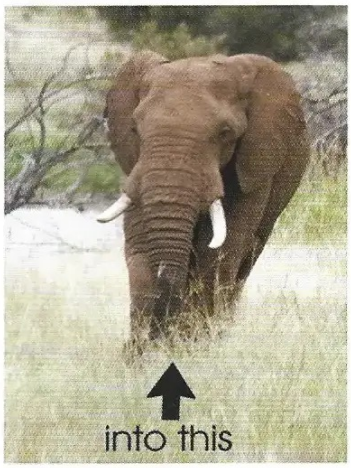
- No video with profanity, obscenity or racist content will be allowed.
- No video longer than 15 seconds will be allowed.
- Multiple entries are absolutely encouraged – if you see someone do better than your entry you can have another go.
- No videos which show physical violence, put the creator or participants at risk of injury or cause physical harm will be allowed.

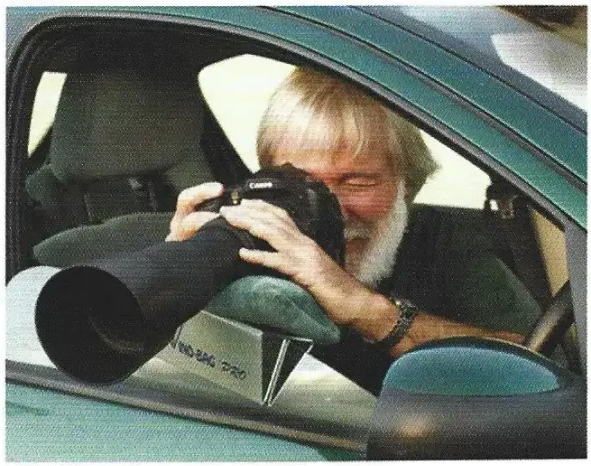
To enter, create your video using the Instagram app and submit your video to us by using our Instagram handle, @htxt.africa, in the message you upload it with along with the hashtag #winaps41tb. Any videos which don't have those two tags in the message won't be considered.

If you really, really don't want to use Instagram you can also mail us your clip to **info@htxt.co.za** with the subject line "I want to win a PS4 1TB".

And that's it. Go get creative, and good luck. The closing date is 15th September – what are you waiting for? **Bit.ly/1L2HnlX**

Wildlife photography giving you the shakes?





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The big tech topics that kept the world talking while you took time off

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Makers! Show off your stuff at Open Design Festival in Cape Town

Get to the Waterfront this month and see a festival of making.

Hey makers, want to showcase your wares in front of a crowd of thousands during the three week long jamboree that is The Open Design Festival in Cape Town next month? You're in luck, because there's two opportunities to get involved.

The festival takes place from 12th to the 23rd of August, and over the course of three weeks will feature everything from pop-up shops to seminars on architecture to toymaking. There are conference streams, expos and events far too numerous to list here.

For makers, however, two things in particular stand out.

The first is that the awesome folks at Cape Town's Maker Station hackspace, who recently launched an effort to build a comprehensive map of maker spaces in Africa and a maker directory for finding like-minded people and artisan manufacturing services, have secured space for makers in the main expos in Watershed, City Hall, Gua S'Thebe and the Cape Town Science Centre. The idea is to get as many people involved as possible on a rota basis throughout the whole festival.

You can show off anything, from PCB building to 3D printing to drones to leatherwork, and there's no charge for taking part in the celebration of innovation. All the organisers ask is that you fill in this form in order that they can allocate times and spaces to the appropriate groups.

And if that's not enough, the festival will end with a three day Maker Faire Cape Town at the Lookout on the V&A Waterfront. This will take place from 21st to 23rd August and will include a separate conference strand as well as exhibition of amateur and commercial maker projects, with international speakers to be confirmed.

The Maker Faire call for makers can be found at the Bitly link below, and if you want an idea of what to expect check out our reports from the event in Joburg last year at the same page .**Bit.ly/1HVttkm**

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SA tech in stats

The numbers that sum up the best of the month

Digital activists in Diepsloot want to raise R2 000 000 to build a new tech hub. Bit.ly/1IJLIuz

Windows 10 was downloaded **14 000 000** times in the first **24 hours** of its release. **Bit.ly/1IJLELt**

SANRAL raised just **R78m** from **eTolls** last month, down almost **1/3** year-on-year. **Bit.ly/1IJLNyI**

Sony's new Xperia M5 has a massive front facing cam. Prepare for 13MP selfies! Bit.ly/1K1S4SE

There were 291 800 new mobile malware programs discovered in just three months this year, according to Kaspersky. **Bit.ly/1IJM2K1**

South African **startup** SweepSouth **just bagged** R1 200 000 **in funding from a** San Francisco-based **accelerator.** Bit.ly/1K1Setq

Enjoy this free copy of **htxt**.africa's Tech Made Easy? There's loads more stories like these, plus in-depth features and news published daily at our website www.**htxt**.co.za.

NEXT MONTH

And if you want even more, keep your eyes peeled for **issue 19** from **1 September** in all good technology retailers.

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